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A Study of the Activities of English  
Women



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A STUDY OF THE ACTIVITIES OF ENGLISH WOMEN  
IN CONNECTION WITH THE PROSECUTION  
OF THE GREAT WAR

BY

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A. B. Morningside College, 1917

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I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY  
SUPERVISION BY Cornelia McBurney French

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## INTRODUCTION

It has been said that in no other country participating in the Great War, did women reach a more complete mobilization than in England. There were less than a million women who could have rendered a larger service<sup>1</sup>. A large number of these were housewives, who had their time fully occupied.

The women of England displayed such patriotism and devotion in their unselfish service in behalf of the National Cause that they achieved recognition of their ability along lines previously open only to men. Circumstances brought about by the war, and their willingness to be of service at the critical time gave them their opportunity to prove that they possessed latent capacities<sup>2</sup> which could be utilized to secure a more decisive victory.

At the outbreak of the war, many women were living in indolence and ease, their chief aims being gaiety and pleasure. When war was declared, these felt a keen sense of impotence and as the men began to leave, they desired to do their part<sup>3</sup>. The women of England had not been brought up to expect war as the women of France and Germany<sup>4</sup> had; yet they rose to the occasion and were an important factor in the successful termination of the struggle. Eleven suffrage leaders were in prison when war was declared. The movement was gaining a large number of adherents<sup>5</sup>, but the leaders declared a truce with the government, suspended their political agitation, and devoted their entire efforts and organization to furthering the success of the National Cause<sup>6</sup>. The National Union of

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1. Blatch, Mobilizing Women Power, 36-38.
  2. Hanataux, "War's Effect on Woman's Status", Current Hist. N.Y. Times Mag., May, 1916, 358-359.
  3. Billington, Roll Call of Serving Women, V.
  4. Wilson, "British Women in the War", Outlook, July 26, 1916, 703.
  5. Fraser, Women and War Work, 260.
  6. Muirhead, "Women in War", Nation, June 10, 1915, 645.



Women's Suffrage Societies of 600 branches with 52,000 members, transformed itself into an active Service League for the relief of distress. As these women were the best organized, their services proved of great benefit to the government. The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies placed 40,000 women workers before the war had been in progress two weeks.<sup>7</sup>

The nurses were probably the first women who knew what their service might be. They played a more important part in this war than in any previous one, since their presence was countenanced in many places formerly forbidden<sup>8</sup> to women.

But the change so noticeable in this war was not their alleviation of suffering on such a large scale, though that had its place. The extensive substitution of women for men, thus releasing men for combatant service was the important new departure. Women have always shown themselves capable of work and sacrifice. But during this war, the status of women advanced far beyond preconceived ideas of their capabilities because they were able to prove their ability by their activities which centered around substitution<sup>9</sup> in work formerly reserved for men.

At first there was much cynicism and opposition shown toward the replacement of men by women. On the whole England was not in favor of women in uniforms<sup>10</sup>. There was a strong feeling that woman's place was in the home and that her talents were for work which centered around that sphere. Farmers were skeptical as to their ability to help with the work on the land<sup>11</sup>. In general the

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7. Blatch, op. cit., 40.

8. Billington, op. cit. 62.

9. Muirhead, "op. cit.", Nation, June 10, 1915, 645.

10. London Times Hist. Mag., XVII, 453.

11. Londonderry, "Women in Khaki", National Service, January, 1920, 28; London Times Hist. Mag., IV, 487.





women were far more willing to help than the men were to have them do so. But as the need increased, the less conservative yielded to suggestions that there might be a hidden reserve force in the supposed weaker sex. Many were doubtful as to the success of the outcome but in most cases admitted they were surprised at the success of the experiments<sup>12</sup>. After this had been demonstrated, it was not long before feminine workers were quite generally utilized. Women were quite well received in munitions but it was some time before the prejudices of farmers and village people were overcome<sup>13</sup>.

Realizing that this was not just a man's war but that both sexes must bear their share, the women did not only the great work of ministering to the sick and wounded. They replaced men in practically every phase of industry including work on the land. In addition to this countless women took active part in various types of organizations for numerous causes. Those who stayed at home maintaining their families when such economy and household thrift was necessary, were also doing their part<sup>14</sup>.

Mr. Asquith said in connection with their work:

"For the first time it has taught us as a nation to realize how large and how decisive is the part that can be played in a world-wide contest by those who are prevented from taking a place in the actual fighting line."

These women proved that heroic fighting was not enough to win a war, but that it was necessary to have organization at home. The importance of the food supply was clearly recognized but the cooperation of women was an essential factor in the conservation of food. The German Chancellor speaking in the Reichstag lamented the fact that

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12. Report of War Cab. Com. 1919; Women in Industry, '70.

13. Spectator, December, 1917, 673-674.

14. "Women's Part in the War", Living Age, Oct. 2, 1915, 57.



England had surpassed Germany in the output of munitions. This was not done by man power but by a substituted woman power. By their efforts the women of England sustained the civil fabric and in doing so achieved recognition in work which before the war was considered "both foreign to their nature and beyond their physical capacity"<sup>15</sup>.

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15. See Asquith's statement in Intro. to McLaren, op. cit., IV.



## CHAPTER I. THE NURSES AND MEDICAL WOMEN.

The nurses in the army and navy nursing reserves were in all probability the only women in England, who knew as soon as war was declared what their service would be, for they could look upon war as a business.

During the South African War, the military nursing service was inadequate even for peace times, and the Admiralty and War Offices decided to make sufficient provision of nurses to meet the demands of war<sup>1</sup>. Not long after the accession of King Edward, Queen Alexandra headed a small committee, called to reorganize the service, and Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service came into existence in April, 1902. Miss Sidney Browne, R.R.C., was appointed matron-in-chief, and this was the first time women were in the War Office<sup>2</sup>. Miss Browne found a staff of eighty-seven nurses, but at the outbreak of the war this senior service numbered about 280 members, including matrons, sisters and staff nurses, with Miss Becher, R.R.C., as matron-in-chief. It also had a large reserve which was immediately sent out<sup>3</sup>.

Before the South African War Princess Christian had realized that the Army System was insufficient for war, so she was instrumental in the creation of the First Army Nursing Reserve. One mistake was made in that each nurse joined as an individual and no attention was paid to the fact that she might specialize in some direction of no use in dealing with wounded men, and in consequence

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1. Billington, The Roll Call of Serving Women, 52; London Times Hist. Mag., IV, 243.
  2. Billington, op. cit., 57; London Times Hist. Mag., IV, 243.
  3. Billington, op. cit., 59; Fraser, Women and War Work, 53.





not prove as efficient, yet these women rendered valuable service and their splendid work under fire early won recognition for them<sup>4</sup>.

In all the large military hospitals the staffs were composed of Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nurses. Their matron-in-chief submitted questions to the Director General. The home hospital at Netley was the chief center of training after they had finished at one of the great general hospitals, and before they were sent to one of the military hospitals. In addition, there were those at Woolwich, Mellbank, and Salisbury Plain as well as other centers. At all of these there were a matron, sisters and staff nurses in proportion to the number of patients received. In peace times these women trained the orderlies of the Royal Army Medical Corps<sup>5</sup>.

The second branch of the service, the Territorial Force Nursing Service, had the largest number of available nurses at the outbreak of the war. It was initiated in 1906 by Miss Huldane. She made plans for an establishment of nurses willing to serve in general hospitals in case the Territorial forces were mobilized. Sir Alfred Keough, Medical Director General and the rest of the department approved the scheme and an advisory council was appointed at the War Office. The success of the force lay in the fact that the matrons of the largest and most important nurses' training centers were appointed principal matrons who received the applications of nurses and sisters wishing to join. After approving their references they sent their names to the Advisory Council of which Queen Alexandra was president. The fact that their work was done thoroughly ac-

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4. Billington, op. cit., 53-54; London Times Hist. Mag., IV, 243.

5. Billington, op. cit., 59.





counts for the ease of mobilization. When the war began there were 3000 nurses on their rolls and August 5, 1914, every principal matron received mobilization orders for every member of her staff. In ten days, twenty-three territorial general hospitals in England, Wales and Scotland were ready to receive wounded. In these hospitals the regular 520 beds were soon found inadequate, and in a few months nearly all arranged to accommodate from 1,000 - 3,000. In addition many auxiliary hospitals had to be organized<sup>6</sup>. By June, 1915, the Territorial Nursing Staff had grown to 4,000 and there were more than 400 Territorial Nurses in hospitals in France, Belgium and clearing stations, as well as the Imperial Nurses<sup>7</sup>.

The third branch was composed of the civilian nurses who supplemented the other branches. The matron-in-chief had the assistance of civil matrons on the nursing board who were the heads of large nursing training schools and who kept in touch with civil hospitals which helped to keep the organization of the seventeen military hospitals up to date. In most cases the nursing staff of large civil hospitals arranged with their matrons so that they could be ready to receive wounded in a very short time<sup>8</sup>.

Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service was important though smaller than her Imperial Military Nursing Service. It numbered from fifty to sixty members. The regular staff did not have a matron-in-chief but was represented by three head sisters at Haslar, Devonport and Chatham, seven superintending sisters, and the sixty nurses. A hundred reserve nurses were added to the list. Women were not carried on fighting ships; after the action the

6. Fraser, op. cit., 53-55; London Times Hist. Mag., IV, 244.

7. Fraser, op. cit., 55.

8. London Times Hist. Mag., 4, 244.



wounded were cared for by sick-bay men who had been trained at one of the three chief hospitals. The wards were without probationers when these men were withdrawn to the ships, so the first demand for nurses of the reserve was to take their places. These were the first nurses mobilized and on August 4th the first party was taken from a London hospital to Haslar, and another to Chatham<sup>9</sup>. In 1912 when the Medical Department of the Admiralty decided to form a Naval Nursing Reserve, it did not make the error of the Military Nursing Reserve. It obtained the help of the matrons of the best hospitals, who called for volunteers whose names were placed on a roll. But this list was revised and submitted to the Medical Department every six months together with information regarding the number of nurses they could provide within six hours, or within a fortnight, making a complete roll of those most suitable to reinforce the regular service. There were two nursing sisters on each hospital ship of the Naval Service and their names appeared as officers of the ships in the Navy List<sup>10</sup>.

The middle days of August, 1914, caused every hospital matron unending work, for their staffs had to be adjusted to meet the calls of either the Naval or Military Reserves and the mobilization of the Nursing Services was considered one of the great feats of the war<sup>11</sup>. Demands were made on private nursing establishments and any place where reliable and capable women could be found for the general work of the wards could not be allowed to suffer.

Besides the regular military and naval nursing services and their reserves, there were the voluntary organizations promi-

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9. Billington, op. cit., 53, 54.

10. Ibid., 53, 55.

11. Ibid., 66; London Times Hist. Mag., IV, 245.





ment among which was the British Red Cross. At the Geneva Convention 1863, the symbol of a red cross on a white background was adopted as a sign that wounded were to be exempt from attack or hostile demonstration; and in 1870, after Sedan, the first British Red Cross Society came into existence with the main purpose of aiding the suffering Germans and the society kept its existence from that time. Their prompt readiness was shown in their preparations made as early as August 2. The President, Queen Alexandra, appealed for funds and secured a trained matron-in-chief, Miss Swift. Many willing nurses from various parts of the country offered their services and these had had such excellent training that it was possible to maintain a high standard of efficiency<sup>12</sup>. In a fortnight between two and three thousand fully qualified nurses had been registered. The Duke of Devonshire lent Devonshire house, where an experienced committee interviewed the applicants and selected only the best material, in the main those with certificates of three years work in their detachments and nominated by their commandant and county director<sup>13</sup>.

At the outbreak of the War, the Red Cross had only the Voluntary Aid Detachment at its call, which had been organized by the Red Cross in 1909 to give voluntary aid to sick and wounded in the event of war in the home territory. It had sixty thousand men and women trained in transport work, cooking, laundry, first aid and home nursing. They had done their work thoroughly. Many of the nurses had attended lectures or taken short training courses in hospital wards. The pharmacists had to secure certificates as to

12. Billington, op. cit., 164-168; London Times Hist. Mag., IV, 247.

13. London Times Hist. Mag., IV, 247.



their knowledge, and the cooks had to show they were capable in their work<sup>14</sup>.

It soon became evident that the V.A.D. nurses must be used, and that the three thousand trained ones secured by the Red Cross would not be enough. Before that time most of the hospitals had been helping the situation by using a V.A.D. nurse in each ward, so as they were needed, they were sent to various Military and Red Cross hospitals where they won high praise. Members with three month's hospital training acted as orderlies. In the Territorial hospitals they were subject to military discipline, but given the privileges of trained nurses. Some were drafted to France by order of the War Office<sup>15</sup>.

By their work in the Military and Red Cross hospitals, thousands of women in the V.A.D. received splendid experience in nursing. A Voluntary Aid hospital with one hundred beds had two trained nurses but the V.A.D. did the remainder of the work. The hours in these hospitals were shorter, but there was keen competition and hard work<sup>16</sup>. The commandant took the place of the head mistress. Usually the girls joined a detachment in their own neighborhood, and they were required to give absolute obedience to the commandant. Some regulations were made at headquarters, but the commandant made her own for each hospital. Their work was not confined to the ward, although that was the center of the hospital. Usually the voluntary workers did all the work with the exception of the services of the sister in each ward and of two or three women who did the roughest work. The chief ambition of these workers was to get to France where

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14. Fraser, op. cit., 55; Billington, op. cit., 167; London Times Hist. Mag., IV, 248.

15. Fraser, op. cit., 56; London Times Hist. Mag., IV, 249.

16. Fraser, op. cit., 57; Stone, Women War Workers, 194.





the work was even harder. The first Commandant was Dame Katherine Furse, and after she took charge of the Women's Royal Naval Service, Lady Amthill succeeded her. Many V.A.D.'s reached France and did distinguished work there. They displayed heroism under fire and their names appeared on casualty lists and some were decorated. Their salary was not high-- at the beginning of the war, a Red Cross Nurse's salary was twenty pounds a year with laundry allowance which was raised to twenty-two pounds with four shillings a week for laundry<sup>17</sup>.

As time passed, rules were relaxed because of the difficulty in securing trained nurses. The age limit was raised and married nurses who had retired reentered the service. In 1915, the hospitals were asked by the Director General of the Army Medical Service to train V.A.D.'s in large numbers as probationers for from three to six months to fit themselves for work under trained nurses. It would be very difficult to mention any names in particular since hundreds of women were active in supporting the Red Cross giving both time and money. Many society women worked long hours packing and sorting medical requirements in the supply depot at 83, Pall Mall<sup>18</sup>.

Another important voluntary organization was one closely connected with British Red Cross, namely St. John's Ambulance Association. In fact it was the original Army Nursing Reserve-- the modern development of the work which originated in the 12th Century with the Knights of St. John. In 1888, Queen Victoria felt it deserved a revival. Before that time, the Police used its members when large crowds were likely to be in the streets; and it had taken

17. Fraser, op. cit., 57; Stone, op. cit., 194-213.

18. Fraser, op. cit., 56-57; London Times Hist. Mag., IV, 250.



upon itself the duty of first aid in case of accidents in the home streets, mines or railway accidents. During the South African War the Marquis of Lansdowne, the Secretary of State for War, used his efforts to unite the Red Cross and St. Johns Association. During the Great War these two organizations worked together under a joint committee. Both were controlled by the War Office and Admiralty during the war although they were independent in peace times. St. John's Ambulance Association had the same system of ambulance workers and V.A.D.'s to call on as the Red Cross<sup>19</sup>.

Among the first nurses to leave was a party of six Red Cross Nurses which went to Brussels August 12, 1914, under the leadership of Miss Richardson. Three days later, Miss Stollard took out a party of eighteen, while Miss Wright took out twenty-two. Two more groups, one of eleven in charge of Miss Beatrice Culler, and another of sixteen under Miss Violetta Thurston, set out August 18. About the same time, Miss Broad headed a group of nine; all remained in Brussels until October 19 when it was taken by the Germans. After the operations at Brussels, the English women served at Antwerp. There were privately equipped units which also served in Belgium. A week after Belgium was invaded Mr. Alfred de Rothschild sent a party of twenty to Brussels. The Duchess of Westminster also sent a contingent all the members of which held high professional certificates. The Duchess of Sutherland had a staff at Namur during the first days of the invasion<sup>20</sup>.

Dr. Hector Munro's Ambulance Unit did early work after Belgium was invaded. His party included Lady Fielding, Mrs. Wynne,

19. Billington, op. cit., 165-6; Fraser, op. cit., 56; London Times Hist. Mag., IV, 247.

20. Billington, op. cit., 68, 69, 72.





Miss Chisholm, Mrs. Knocker, Miss McNaughten and a few others. This unit received official recognition by the Belgian Government and was placed under military disposition. Their cars were often sent to the markets of small towns which had been shelled and returned with wounded, in many cases while shells/<sup>were</sup>flying overhead. These women knew more than one language, drove their own motor cars and were chosen because they were among the most sensible and capable women England had to offer. Later the King of the Belgians conferred the Order of Leopold upon Lady Dorothy Fielding for her bravery under fire which won her so much respect and admiration<sup>21</sup>.

Later, Miss McNaughten had charge of a food center of her own and dispensed soup and similar articles of diet to sick and wounded soldiers travelling to and from the front. After this, she went with an expedition to Northern Russia, which apparently did not get through. The members of the expedition endured a nerve-racking journey home, the results of which caused Miss McNaughten's death<sup>22</sup>.

The Baroness de T'Serclaes, formerly Mrs. Knocker and Miss Mairi Chisholm worked in Belgium from the beginning of the war and achieved splendid results. They first went to Belgium in September, 1914, with Dr. Munro's Unit and started work in Ghent and Furnes. Mrs. Knocker was an expert chauffeur and drove an ambulance car back and forth between Dix-Mude and Furnes, under heavy shell fire, when men broke down and were unable to continue driving. They began their big work in November, 1914, when they left the ambulance unit and started to work in a cellar in the demolished village of Pervyse, establishing an advanced dressing station where the wounded might recover from the shock before the jolting of the trip to the hospi-

21: Ibid. 22-23.

22: London Nation, May 10, 1919, 178.



tal. They lived in the cellar for months, often enduring severe bombardments, cold and hunger. After the cellar was destroyed, they moved to a cottage and were shelled out two more times. March, 1915, a decree was passed by the Commander of Allied Armies in Paris forbidding the presence of any women in the firing line, but due to the request of the Belgian authorities these two women were excepted and were officially attached to the Third Division of the Belgian Army. Both were decorated Chevaliers of the Order of Leopold<sup>23</sup>.

Miss Violetta Thurston who had gone to Belgium, August 18, 1914, in charge of a group of nurses sent out by St. John's Ambulance Association saw the historic entry of the Germans into Brussels, and when the Germans asked for volunteers to nurse at a small village near Charleroi offered her services. Two other nurses accompanied her leaving the rest of the contingent in hospitals in Brussels. Miss Thurston had charge of a hospital under German authority and nursed German, Belgian and French wounded. After a trying time because of the cruelty of the German system, she felt the necessity of returning to see to the nurses left behind, and was granted a leave of absence, but did not return as the Germans decided to keep English nurses out of Belgium and sent them through Germany to the Danish frontier. She was on the verge of returning to England, when she heard of the need of trained nurses in Russia, so after gaining permission from the English, she offered her services to the Russian Red Cross and joined a flying ambulance column. After leading a remarkable life, she was wounded while caring for the wounded in the trenches, and was forced to return to England. For her services to Russia, she was awarded the Medal of St. George<sup>24</sup>. She returned to Russia in 1915, although

23. McLaren, Women of the War, 57-61.

24. Ibid., 85-89; Billington, op. cit., 69.





to work of a different nature. She assisted organizing hospital units sent from England to aid refugees. In the later years of the war, she was asked to preside as matron of Hopital de l'Ocean at LaPanne, Belgium, a hospital of 1,000 beds, five miles from the front which dealt with the most critical cases. Besides the Medal of St. George, she was decorated by Belgian officers and the King of England<sup>25</sup>.

But the service of the English women was not confined to Belgium. The first Red Cross Party to Paris left August 29 but was sent back because at that time the Germans were approaching the French capital. In another month, another party went out to the Croix Rouge Hospital, another to the Ambulance Americaine. One after another followed. The largest Red Cross hospital was at Boulogne and was the base of the Red Cross activities. Mrs. Ludlow, R.R.C., was matron<sup>26</sup>.

The French nursing system proved inadequate after the separation of Church and State. The nursing had been done by the nuns, therefore there was no well organized system of nursing. A few hospitals were organized but women did not want to take up nursing without the protection of the veil. They felt such work was beneath a lady. Of course there was the French Red Cross, which had something like a million pounds behind it, and was able to equip many hospitals in private homes, hotels and similar places, but they lacked trained nurses, they had not had sufficient training to be up to the British standard. In November, the French War Department asked Mrs. Bedford Fenurck to choose and send over some competent English nurses. She believed in raising the standard and<sup>as</sup> she was in touch with nurses

25. McLaren, op. cit., 87-89.

26. Billington, op. cit., 174-176.



all over England, she was able to carry out her idea. As a result the French Flag Nursing Corps was founded, the English nurses were under orders of the Medical Chief de Service of the French Military hospitals. Miss Grace Ellison was Directrice Generale. They met with many difficulties, because of the organization of the French Army and at first were not given the status of nurses in the British Army. The French couldn't believe that the English nurses were ladies trained for their duties but they changed their ideas of nursing after seeing the splendid work of the English nurses<sup>27</sup>.

The record of the medical women was a brilliant one and they won a lasting respect for their ability which greatly advanced the position of women in the medical world. Foremost among these were Dr. Louisa Garrett Anderson, daughter of the pioneer woman doctor of England, and Dr. Flora Murray. During the month after the war broke out, these women formed the Woman's Hospital Corps, a complete small unit and offered it to the Army Medical department, which refused it recognition. They did not want women doctors for the men who alone would be their patients; at the same time there were many hospitals in England calling for women, but these two women doctors had decided to go and made up their staff, then offered their services to the French government, which accepted them and officially assigned them to Claridges Hotel. They had admirable equipment and by October 15 were ready to receive patients, English and French.

When the British Royal Army Medical Corps saw how well these women did, they became interested and finally asked them to form a hospital at Wimeraux near Boulogne, which later amalgamated with the Royal Army Medical Corps. This selection by the British

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27. Ibid., 140-146; Stone, op. cit., 155-160.





Government was their first triumph. In February, 1915, they were called to a larger task. At a meeting of Medical Women in London, Sir Alfred Keough, Director General of the Army Medical Department paid high tribute to their efficiency, and asked them to return to London to take complete charge of a hospital with five hundred beds, or more if they wished. Under their entire supervision the buildings of the Halborne Infirmary were made over into a finely equipped hospital, which had a splendid record during the war. They proved for the first time that women had a place in medicine and surgery as well as nursing, and that they could equal the success of men not just with the ailments of women and children. They accomplished their work through the war without the slightest sign of strain<sup>28</sup>.

At the outbreak of the war, Dr. Elsie Inglis, M.B., C.M., felt that the medical women should organize in order to render the best possible service to their country. She initiated the organization of the Scottish Women's Hospitals, the staff of which was composed entirely of women. The idea was carried out by the Scottish Federation of Women's Suffrage Societies. Because in the early months of the war the War Office refused the services of women's hospitals, they offered themselves to the allies<sup>29</sup>. The first unit went to Royaumont in France, and established itself in an old abbey; this hospital was equipped very completely. Another unit went to Troyes. Dr. Inglis, the leading spirit, spent the first months getting things organized. Then in April, 1915, she went to Serbia with the third unit as Commissioner to the Scottish Women's hospitals established there. On her arrival, the Serbian Army Medical Corps

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28. Billington, op. cit., 148-150; McLaren, op. cit., 13-16; Fraser, op. cit., 59-60.

29. Fraser, op. cit., 61; McLaren, op. cit., 31-35.





was threatened with destruction. One-third had died of typhus. She organized four hospital units and saved the Serbians from despair<sup>30</sup>. She was at Krushevatz when the Germans and Austrians over-ran Serbia, and refused to leave the Serbian wounded. In February, 1916, the hospital was emptied and the staff were taken prisoners. After many discomforts, she reached England. In recognition of her services she was honored by the Serbian Government-- the first woman to wear the decoration, First Order of the White Eagle, the highest honor Serbia can give<sup>31</sup>. Other members of her staff received the Order of St. Sava. She wished to return to Mesopotamia with her unit, but the war office refused because things were in a terrible condition there from a medical point of view. As a result she went to the Eastern front to the aid of the Serbian Division in Southern Russia, which in reality was not Serbian but Jugo-slav, being composed of volunteers from Serbs, Croats, Slavenes of Austria Hungary. These had been taken prisoners by the Russians and then enrolled with the entente. They were dependent on Southern Russia for medical aid but Russia's needs were unlimited, so this division suffered with them<sup>32</sup>. Her new unit numbered seventy-six women, a staff of women doctors, an X-Ray operator, seventeen fully trained nurses and others. They started a base hospital at Medjidia which was desolate from bombardments. After a fortnight's work, the Bulgarian advance necessitated a retreat during which there was much suffering. At length they reached Braila where they gave valuable aid; then some of the unit returned to England, but Dr. Inglis remained and worked for the Russians and Serbians on the Eastern Front. She conducted her unit to England, November 23, 1916, and three days later, she

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30. Fraser, op. cit., 61-65.

31. McLaren, op. cit., 33.

32. New Europe, Dec. 6, 1917, 248-9.



died. The Serbians gave her every honor. They erected a fountain in her honor at Mladenovatz<sup>33</sup>.

It will be remembered that the first unit sent out by the Scottish Women's hospitals, established a hospital in the Abbey at Royaumont in 1914. This was done under the administration of Mrs. Harley, sister of Field Marshall Viscount French. Dr. Frances Ivens had charge and by the end of the war it was one of the finest in France. It had a perfect X-Ray installment which Madame Curie chose. Because this unit was so successful, the French Government asked for another, which Mrs. Harley took charge of and established at Troyes, May, 1915. It was a hospital under canvas, the first to be used sanctioned by authorities. Later in 1915 when the French Expeditionary Force went to Salonika, military authorities asked this unit to accompany it and Mrs. Harley went as administrator. They went to Gevgheli, Serbia. Then after the Serbian retreat, they established a hospital at Salonika. In July, 1915, she went to England and returned with a flying column of motor ambulances in order to facilitate the speedy transport of wounded Serbians. This worked near the Macedonian front. In January, 1917, she turned her attention to Serbian civilian refugees at Monastir. She established an orphanage and cared for about eighty children at her own expense. While at this work she was wounded by a shell splinter and died. In recognition of her services, she was awarded the Croix de Guerre with palm leaves<sup>34</sup>.

With Mrs. Harley's unit to Serbia from Royes was Miss Edith Stoney, a woman of high education and with great mathematical

33. Ibid., 248-249.

34. McLaren, op. cit., 132-135; Blatch, Mobilizing Woman Power, 40.





and scientific ability. She had joined the Scottish Women's hospitals in 1915, and worked at Troyes where she installed the X-Ray Department. When she went to Serbia, she showed much foresight in taking along a portable engine which she bought at her own expense because the committee did not feel able to do so. As a result although the hospital at Gevgheli had no electric supply, she was able to use her X-Ray, and as a by-product, she lighted the whole hospital with electricity. This was the only British hospital able to use an X-Ray, in that region. When the French left Gevgheli, the unit set up a hospital near Salonika where she not only did her regular work but worked for British and French doctors in other hospitals who referred their cases to her. The Serbian government decorated her with the Order of St. Sava<sup>35</sup>.

Lady Paget was another woman who did service in Serbia. Her husband had been a former minister there, and she had had experience in the Balkan Wars. She took a hospital unit to Serbia which reached there in November, 1914, when the Austrian invasion was at its height. After a rush of surgical work, the typhus epidemic followed causing unending work for her small staff; as a result, Lady Paget took the typhus and after recovering she went to England but returned to Serbia in July, 1915, and reorganized her staff. She did valuable work until February, 1916, when she was taken prisoner by the enemy and sent to her home. King Peter honored her with the First Order of St. Sava<sup>36</sup>.

Another woman worthy of mention was Mrs. St. Clair Stobart who had had experience in the Balkan Wars; because of which St. John's Ambulance Association put her at the head of an ambulance

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35. McLaren, op. cit., 55-58.

36. Ibid., 17-20.



unit which went to Belgium in August, 1914. She was captured by the Germans and condemned to be shot as a spy but escaped and established a hospital in Antwerp, where she worked during the bombardment. After the fall of Antwerp the French Red Cross asked her to establish a hospital at Cherbourg. As soon as this was well under way, she went to Serbia with a new unit and established a tent hospital at Kraguevatz which proved much more satisfactory than the unsanitary buildings. Some members of the staff died of typhoid. In this hospital they handled both civil and military cases. In September, 1915, when there was danger from the Bulgarians the Serbian Military authorities asked her to organize part of her unit as a flying field hospital and made her commander with the rank of major in the Serbian Army. This unit was called the First Serbian English Field Hospital and went to the Bulgarian front October 1, 1915, but was soon ordered to face the Germans and Austrians. In a short time it was forced to retreat and the ambulance and hospital equipment had to be destroyed, but she led her column without the loss of one member--the only commander who did so.<sup>37</sup>

Dr. Florence Stoney who was head of the electrical department in the New Hospital for Women in London went with Mrs. Stobart to Belgium in 1914. She escaped from Antwerp and took charge of the X-Ray department in the French Red Cross Hospital at Cherbourg. In 1915 this hospital was not needed as all movable cases were taken to England so Dr. Stoney returned to England and was the first woman doctor to work under the War Office; she was asked to take charge of the X-Ray Department in Fulham Military hospital and continued working there. She started at that work two weeks before Doctors Anderson and Murray started Endell Street hospital. She was the

37. Ibid., 44-48.





only woman working in the hospital and ranked equal with the men but had no military standing<sup>38</sup>.

The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies sent the Millicent Faucett Unit, named after its President, to work in Russia in 1916. It did work among the Polish refugees, especially women and children<sup>39</sup>.

They had a systematic plan of caring for the wounded. They were first cared for under any cover possible in the rear of the fighting line, after which they were taken to the clearing hospital which although near the firing was usually out of range. Cases were kept there no longer than was absolutely necessary, then they were taken on admirably fitted hospital trains to the base hospitals. They moved cases which in civil life would have been kept in the same bed for weeks or months, yet there was a low rate of mortality. There were also quayside hospitals with a ward for emergencies and one for casualties; at these, dressings were given attention and other complications taken care of. The British Red Cross Society provided buffets at these where they served soup, tea, cocoa and cigarettes. The wounded were carried to England on hospital ships which sailed up to a large shed where railway carriages were ready for the wounded who were transferred to these. The nurses directed the movement of especially dangerous cases which were lifted on elevators in order to save jolting from going up gangways<sup>40</sup>.

The hospital ships belonged to the navy; on these the nurses had to be ready for any emergency for in many cases they had to wait longer than they thought before being sent home, which neces-

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38. Ibid., 53-55.

39. Fraser, op. cit., 65.

40. Billington, op. cit., 108-125.





sitated operations and other work. From these, they were transferred to the Red Cross trains awaiting them. Those unable to undergo a long journey were taken to Netley.

During the first months of the war, the military hospitals and the territorial hospitals supplemented by the civilian hospitals were the base. Later the army council decided to establish a number of vast military hospitals which included the territorial, civil, and private nursing institutions. After March, 1915, the Army Medical Department shut down the Red Cross hospitals in France and discouraged nurses wishing to go to Serbia or France. The smaller V.A.D. hospitals were turned over largely to convalescent homes<sup>41</sup>.

The vast army of nurses did work which covered a wide field; any place where there were sick and wounded there were nurses to minister to their needs. They were never without nurse's care from the time they were taken to <sup>an</sup> ambulance until they reached home. Their bravery saved the life of many a sufferer.

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41. Ibid., 181.



## CHAPTER II. WOMEN IN INDUSTRY.

One of the most far-reaching changes which took place in the lives of English women during the Great War was the result of Great Britain's supplying women to take the place of men in practically every phase of industry. They proved their ability for the first time by accomplishing things which before the war people would have said were foreign to their nature and physical capacity; and were successful in work along lines which had been reserved for men, but were thrown open to women because of the great need for men in the army. They sustained the industrial organization at home and released numbers of able fighters, thus showing the important part which can be played by those behind the lines, and that in its way it is as important as the work of combatants in the trenches. Before their industrial work during the war, the economic position of women in England was of inferior status in relation to men but their work during the war had a lasting effect upon the statesman's and economist's view of their ability and functions and will have much influence in improving their economic and political status.

In earlier days, when women had a place in industry, it was usually to supplement the family wage. Records of the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries show that when women were employed with men in different forms of agriculture the men usually did the heaviest part of the work; although in domestic service a woman required a larger number of accomplishments than she did in the twentieth century<sup>1</sup>.

The number of women working in industry increased continuously from 1901 to 1911. In the metal trades, the proportion of

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1. Report of War Cab. Com., 1918: Women in Industry, 28.





women to men declined between 1861 to 1881 but with the development of automatic machinery their employment was favored on comparatively light processes, and tended to increase. In the chemical trades, the proportion of women rose from one to fifteen and a half in 1861, to one to three and a half in 1911. In the textile trades, sixty years before the war there were about the same number of men as women employed; but just before the war there were four women to three men. There was also an increase in the number of women employed in the clothing trades from 1861 to 1881; then until the war the proportion remained almost constant, about seven women to four men. In 1861, there were about four and a half men to every woman employed in the food, drink and tobacco trades; but the number increased so that in 1911 there were two men to every woman. In these the greatest change was in tobacco which became practically a woman's trade. In the paper and printing trades in 1861, four times as many men as women were employed; but in 1911 the proportion had changed to a little less than two men to one woman. Paper manufacture was an exception. Men were in the preponderance because it is a heavy manual trade. A somewhat larger proportion of women were employed in brick, cement and pottery trades. The employment of women working in skin and leather trades steadily increased; but the number working in mines and quarries remained insignificant<sup>2</sup>.

Before 1911, a decrease was noticeable in the large number of women who had been employed in domestic service. Agriculture had become a man's occupation. In commerce the number of shop assistants had grown steadily as had the number of clerks. In local government, men had been in the majority but this tended to de-

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2. Ibid., 8-9.



crease; which was also true of the professional classes including teachers and nurses<sup>3</sup>.

Between 1881 and 1911 the proportion of men in occupations increased five percent but the proportion of women workers declined one and one-fifth percent despite the fact that in industry proper the proportion of men increased four percent while that of women increased five percent. This was attributed to the decrease in the number of women in agriculture and domestic service. The proportion of men and women in occupations remained about the same in spite of the increase of women in industry, because of the increase of both men and women in occupations in general. The employment of women was increased in many operations from 1901, but this was offset by the smaller number of women in other branches<sup>4</sup>.

While women were being employed in many trades before the war they were considered inferior to men; and in the majority of occupations they were confined to the lighter and most unskilled as well as the lowest paid lines of work<sup>5</sup>. Dressmaking, clothing and textile trades were regarded as belonging to women.

There were three phases evident in the employment of women in England during the war. The first was a period of unemployment which was widespread; the effects of which were felt most keenly by the women. This was caused by the stoppage of commerce and industry due to the financial shock, the cancellation of contracts with nations at war, the difficulties in securing raw materials and by the panic economy which swept the country at the beginning of the war. These resulted in a falling off in the luxury trades which caused thousands of dressmakers, milliners, lace-makers,

3. Ibid., 9.

4. Ibid., 9-10.

5. Ibid., 68.





laundresses, domestic servants, as well as professional women, to be thrown out of work. These circumstances were responsible for much confusion and distress during the winter of 1914-15, although there were organized efforts to relieve it<sup>6</sup>.

The second phase began as soon as the first shock was over. Because of the great need of clothing for the army, firms needed all the help they could obtain, which made openings for the women who needed employment, and many availed themselves of the opportunity; but unfortunately many sewing women were not trained for the work or were not in touch with firms who needed their assistance. As a consequence, those employed were working to the limit while women in other parts of the country were badly in need of employment. The immobility of labor was never so clearly illustrated as at that time<sup>7</sup>. The real munition problem did not develop until December, 1914, or in the spring of 1915<sup>8</sup>. Lord Kitchener was calling for more men; at the same time the Government was realizing the importance of the munition supply. The Government wondered if there might not be a reserve of workers among the women and March 17, 1915, the Board of Trade asked the women of England to register for any work they were able to do. President Runciman of the Board of Trade pointed out that the full fighting power of the nation was needed on the battlefield and said that "Any woman who by working helps to release a man or to equip a man for fighting does national war service"<sup>9</sup>. He asked them to enter their names on the Register for War Service which could be obtained at Labor Exchanges or any

6. Ibid., 79; Monthly Review, April, 1918, 204; Andrews, Econ. Effects of the War on Women and Children in Gt. Britain, 22.

7. Monthly Review, April, 1918, 204.

8. Report of War Cab. Com. 1919: op. cit., 81; Monthly Review.

9. Fraser, op. cit., 97.





local agency for employment, or through the women's societies. Previous to this appeal some women had replaced men; women clerks had taken bank positions made vacant as men left for service, and some women had been working in munitions although by December, 1914, they had only increased by three thousand. The employment problem was beginning to right itself. Women were being reabsorbed into occupations where they had previously done little, and unemployment grew smaller. In the main these women were those already engaged as wage earners. This appeal was intended to reach another class, if possible to utilize to best advantage the women of education and training who had been putting forth their efforts in behalf of voluntary organizations<sup>10</sup>. According to the appeal women were greatly needed in farm work, dairy work, brush making, leather stitching, clothing trades and armament work, and those without experience would be given training<sup>11</sup>.

The women responded readily, some immediately. The leading organizations called the attention of their members to the appeal. 40,000 registered within a week, after which the number increased at about 5,000 a week<sup>12</sup>. In spite of the fact that women continued to register, employers were not anxious to utilize them. By the time 80,000 had registered only 2,000 had been called which made them think the need was not as urgent as had been made out. The board of Trade required a larger staff to cope successfully with the situation; in addition the employers had not been approached. When this was done, matters improved. Industrial women were given first chance at all vacancies, then those on the War Register<sup>13</sup>. Al-

10. Ibid., 95-97; Billington, op. cit., 204-207.

11. Fraser, op. cit., 97; Billington, op. cit., 206-7.

12. London Times Hist. Mag., IV, 277; Billington, op. cit., 207.

13. London Times Hist. Mag., IV, 278.



though there were difficulties, the situation greatly improved and during the second half of 1915, women were rapidly absorbed into industry. By January, 1916, in industry proper the number of women employed had increased by a quarter of a million; nearly one-half of this number were employed in the Metal and Chemical trades<sup>14</sup>.

Early in 1916, the third phase was evident, which was characterized by the marked efforts of the Government to increase the supply of women workers. From that time, the number of women rose until by July, 1918, the total number increased twenty-two and a half percent; or from under 6,000,000 to 7,300,000. These figures included V.A.D. nurses. In industry, in the metal trades alone, there was an increase of about 600,000; 195,000 of these directly replaced men. These were mostly in munitions, as the war made few changes in other metal trades<sup>15</sup>. But although substitution was greatest in munitions that was only one field of women's activities. There was scarcely an industry or occupation in which the number of women did not increase and some substitution take place. Fewer women were employed in domestic service and small dressmaking establishments because they left to take up some man's work and were not replaced; many of those remaining took men's places. Between 1914 and 1918 there was an increase of over seven hundred thousand women employed in industry. The next largest increase was in Commerce, the largest part of these were clerks. Next, in National and local Government, where they were employed chiefly in Civil Service<sup>16</sup>.

Women were active in Chemical trades during the war because of the large requirements of the Government and because sup-

14. Report of War Cab. Com., op. cit., 80.

15. Ibid., 81, 85.

16. Ibid., 80.





plies from Germany were shut off. The number of women increased by 64,000; 35,000 of these directly replaced men. They worked with explosives, in the soap and candle trades, as well as in drugs and fine chemicals where there were many before the war, and in heavy chemicals where there were few before the war. This work was heavy and unskilled, which resulted in the women being employed on the lighter work, and threw the heavier part on the men. Employers felt this was not suitable work for women. In drugs and fine chemicals the women did not do men's work for the processes were rearranged so that they did the work of boys. Again the men were forced to do the heavier work. The same was true in explosives. Their work was good in quantity and quality, especially on light work requiring care, but they were said to lack initiative. Moreover, they were considered poor time keepers, and their lack of endurance caused a smaller output. Yet, they improved with experience<sup>17</sup>.

In textile trades, the proportion of women rose, but the number did not increase for notwithstanding the increase in the demand of clothing for the army there was a big reduction in the cotton industry. Taken as a whole, there was a substitution of about 60,000 women for men. The emphasis was on war trades. Most of the women substituted were in weaving where they had been in the preponderance. Whenever possible, they employed married women who had been in the trade, who easily got back into the work. Payment was by the piece and because of the nature of the work small bands worked the fastest. Employers were satisfied with their efforts<sup>18</sup>.

There was much activity in the woolen and worsted industries as a result of Government requirements although there was a shortage of

17. Ibid., 86-87.

18. Ibid., 89.



labor but this lessened somewhat during the last year of the war because it was difficult to procure raw materials. While the proportion of women rose, the number remained about the same as in 1914, although there was a substitution of about 60,000 women for men. The quality of their work was good but they lost more time than men, which was probably because many of the married women had home duties<sup>19</sup>. In bleaching, dyeing and finishing trades connected with the woolen industries more women were employed, nine thousand of whom replaced men. On light processes, the women's output was equal to the men's but much of the work involved handling heavy materials which caused physical strain. In such cases their output fell short. Some employers approved of their work while others felt they had been used before the war in as many places as was wise<sup>20</sup>.

In boot and shoemaking, they did good work especially on processes adapted to them but they were unable to endure long sustained effort. Many processes were found to be too heavy for them and it was felt that men would not want to give them all the light work after the war<sup>21</sup>.

Women also took the place of men in the food and drink trades, baking, and to a small extent in printing and bookbinding. They were sometimes employed on a semi-skilled work and employers felt more might have been employed as much of their work was satisfactory, especially that of a routine nature but they lacked the initiative of men who were preferred for many types of work<sup>22</sup>.

There was a large increase of women in the wood trades although they did little in saw-milling, cabinet work and such trades.

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19. Ibid., 89-90.

20. Ibid., 90-91.

21. Ibid., 92-93.

22. Ibid., 94.





The increase was due to their employment on aircraft work. This was in an experimental stage during the war as it was a new industry. Before the war the majority of workers were skilled mechanics and cabinet makers, but it expanded and women built up about a third of the industry. Inexperienced workers easily learned separate processes. Some of the work was rated as skilled by Trade Unions but employers did not want to keep the women at the rate for skilled wages<sup>23</sup>.

The employment of women increased in the China and Earthenware trades and women replaced men, but it was felt that they had been employed before the war as much as was advisable. Their output was inferior in quantity or quality and they did not keep good time<sup>24</sup>.

On the whole, the increased employment of women in leather trades proved successful. Few had been employed in heavy leather tanning before the war; in 1919, they were thirty percent of the workers, and the women did the lighter work well. In light leather tanning, they were very acceptable, although their output fell short which was attributed to lack of training. It was felt that with better training they would equal the men.

Their employment in transport was an interesting experiment. The total number of women increased by 80,000; 23,000 of these were on the clerical staff; but they worked also as conductors, carwomen, motor drivers, lamp cleaners, and along such lines. More women were employed than the men they replaced and the remaining men did the heavier work. Two women porters replaced one man in small railway stations. In general they were not as efficient

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23. Ibid., 94-95.

24. Ibid., 95.

25. Ibid., 97-98.





as the men owing to the heavy nature of the work, and employers complained that the men showed a tendency to lower their output to the level of the women. Women were employed everywhere in the tramway and omnibus service; they increased to over 26,000. By 1918, women conductors were ninety percent of the workers. Their work was not wholly successful, in fact they were said to be unreliable in reporting for work, unable to collect fares in rush hours, caused employers a higher relative cost, as well as a larger number of complaints from the public. It was thought that the women would have done better had they been allowed shorter hours, besides the work was abnormal during the war.<sup>25</sup>

Women replaced men in large numbers in hotels and as has been mentioned in domestic service, although many women were drawn from these to munitions causing a shortage which had to be made up by women doing their own work. It was the general opinion that these women would not return<sup>26</sup>.

Commerce was the largest field after industry in which such large numbers of women replaced men. There were over 365,000 more women in commercial occupations in 1918, than there were in 1914, the largest number of these directly replaced men. Women worked as managers as well as in grocery, fish and hardware stores. When the work was heavy the women were not efficient but many forms of work were subdivided and in such cases women seemed expected to stay although men would be needed for heavier work. Women assistants promoted to managers did very well<sup>27</sup>. It was hard to compare untrained women with men of experience and in many cases employers chose young

25. Ibid., 97-98.

26. Ibid., 99.

27. Ibid., 100.



girls to avoid paying the adult rate<sup>27</sup>.

The number of women in finance and banking increased by 65,000 during the war. Their work was chiefly correspondence, tracing missing goods, looking up particulars for claims, account and ledger work, and clerical work in engineering shops. Often the women lacked the men's training but those trained practically equalled the men. They proved very able in banks, but were not given as responsible places. Women clerks kept much better time than industrial women<sup>28</sup>.

Of the large number of women employed in National and local Government, the largest increase was in Civil Service which was roughly about 160,000. The number of women working in the Post Office doubled during the war by 60,000. They were employed in occupations previously reserved for men, and to a larger extent on overtime and Sunday work. Comparing their work with men, it was found that as counter clerks they were nearly equal to men except during a rush. There were 20,000 post women whose work as a whole was not as valuable as men, for they could carry only two-sevenths of the weight men carried. But in administrative work, trained women of exceptional ability were equal to men. Many of the women lacked training which was probably more of a cause for inefficiency than any inequality, so that in such lines women could be employed much more extensively than before the war<sup>29</sup>.

22,000 men teachers left for military service and 13,000 women took their places and probably there will be more women in the profession after the war<sup>30</sup>.

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27. Ibid., 101.

28. Ibid., 100-101.

29. Ibid., 101-102.

30. Ibid., 103.





The close of the war found women working wherever their services could be utilized and releasing large numbers of men for military service. There were several changes occasioned by the introduction of women into men's occupations. First they returned to manual labor or occupations as agriculture, transportation, and chemical manufacture; second, they were admitted to skilled trades of an apprentice-like character; lastly, the normal movement of women into repetition and routing processes or trades was hastened. The shortage of men brought about the necessity for such changes and women filled them because of their enthusiasm and because in many organized trades the Union rules were relaxed, a point which will be considered later<sup>31</sup>.

Women's work was very satisfactory except where physical strength and weight were necessary. In many cases, women excelled men in delicate manipulations; they were able to stand the monotony of a repetition job better than men, but such work was unsuited to them when it was beyond the limits of their physical strength. They showed some faults of inaccuracy and overhaste and were careless of their tools, but this criticism applied more to munition workers, composed of all types of inexperienced women working under high pressure. Women tired sooner than men but what they lacked in muscular power they made up in diligence and conscientiousness. Since the manual labor trades included some heavy processes unfitted to women they were employed on such work as far as was economically sound before the war. But their success during the war showed employers that they could be employed much more extensively in trades previously closed to them<sup>32</sup>.

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31. Ibid., 103.

32. Ibid., 103, 104.



## CHAPTER III. WOMEN IN MUNITIONS.

Before the war, it was estimated that there were about fifty thousand men and practically no women employed in munition work<sup>1</sup>. As the war progressed, the munition problem developed, although it was six months before the real importance of munitions was realized. Few women were called to make ammunition and by December, 1914, there was an increase of only 3,000 women.

During the first half of 1915, the problem was realized and there was an attempt to meet it by ordinary means. Twenty-six thousand women were added during this period, but while their employment was important they were used on only a few unskilled processes<sup>2</sup>. During the second half of 1915, however, the Ministry of Munitions made every possible effort to obtain the mobilization of women. In order to accomplish this, it was necessary to secure relaxation of Trade Union rules by which the activities of women laborers were restricted to processes which were thought best fitted to them, with the view to protect the rights of the men who feared that the indiscriminate use of women might prove detrimental to their interests. In addition, they had obtained the consent of employers to such regulations and shut women from the Unions<sup>3</sup>. The Government arranged a series of conferences with the Trade Unions, with the main object of obtaining the relaxation of these and other rules that restricted the employment of women. The Government practically compelled this change in industry; that is the dilution of skilled by unskilled workers or by women.

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1. Claudy, "British Munitions", Sci. Am., April 12, 1919, 387.
  2. Report of War Cab. Com. 1919: op. cit., 81.
  3. Ibid., 27.





This dilution resulted in important changes in labor, not only by transforming the industrial organization but by changing the status of women as well. The Treasury Agreement of March 19, 1915, was the outcome of these conferences. The Union representatives consented to recommend the employment of women for the duration of the war; and if semi-skilled workers did the work of skilled men, they were to be paid the rates for such work. In return the Government promised to limit profits in shops where Union rules were relaxed<sup>4</sup>.

This was followed by legislation known as the Munitions Acts; the first was passed July 2, 1915, to further the manufacture of munitions by prohibiting strikes<sup>5</sup>.

During the summer of 1915, the Ministry of Munitions began increased efforts to augment the production of munitions. The Government was forced to proceed slowly for the men did not approve of the changes made without their consent. This became evident in November, 1915, when the Ministry of Munitions urged employers to utilize women, but, if possible, to get the cooperation of the men. It also published Dilution Bulletins, and other propaganda, in the form of a large illustrated booklet, which showed how women might be successfully employed. In addition, exhibitions were arranged at various industrial centers which had two main parts, actual samples of munitions made by women, and photographs of women doing work on apparatus or processes which could not be shown. They did all in their power to convince employers that they should avail themselves of the services of women<sup>6</sup>. As a result, 45,000 workers

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4. Ibid., 198-199; Andrews, op. cit., 44-46.

5. Report of War Cab. Com. 1919: op. cit., 110; Andrews, op. cit., 48

6. Andrews, op. cit., 49-54.





were added and throughout the war dilution was the chief method of increasing the supply of workers in munitions. From the beginning of 1916, the number continued to increase steadily and by July, 1918, there were about 600,000 more women metal workers than in 1914<sup>7</sup>.

By the end of the war, they were employed on practically every sort of operation except those which required great technical experience or physical strength. The largest number of these women were drawn from classes who had previously worked for a living, but some were well-to-do women who worked from patriotic motives; and it was in part due to the efforts of these trained women that the experiment was a success<sup>8</sup>.

Shell making was the most important single trade. In general, sixty percent of the workers were women, but in some shops ninety percent were women<sup>9</sup>. They worked on all processes from the beginning to the finished shell. More small shells were turned out in a fortnight than in a year before<sup>10</sup>. During the Boer War, a company made about 2,000,000 rifle cartridges in one week; but at the beginning of this war the same company manufactured 25,000,000 in the same length of time. As the war progressed, this production was greatly increased. At the beginning of this war, an automobile factory in one week produced eighteen hundred shells, 9.12 in diameter, but in 1918 it was turning out fifty thousand a week<sup>11</sup>.

Women also worked in gun and aircraft factories, some undertaking very difficult operations on giant guns. They worked with

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7. Report of War Cab. Com. 1919: op. cit., 81.

8. Claudy, "Brit. Munitions", Sci. Am., April 12, 1919, 375.

9. "Women in Brit. Munition Factories", Sci. Am. Sup., July 6, 1918, 8; Report of War Cab. Com. 1919; op. cit. 81.

10. Fraser, op. cit., 109.

11. "Women in British Munition Factories", Sci. Am. Sup., July 6, 1918, 8.



high explosives in the danger buildings where they inserted the fuses. One slip might have meant death. They also risked poisoning from T.N.T.<sup>12</sup>

As many who volunteered for work in munitions were not called upon, the London Society for Women's Suffrage, which was running Women's Service, tried to find places for them. They learned that acetylene welders were needed, for welding was essential to aircraft, so they started a small workshop with Miss E. C. Woodward, an experienced metal worker, as instructor. The manager of an aircraft factory near London assured them he would give women a trial if they had had satisfactory training. They proved efficient and the school was enlarged. These workers went all over the country. As a result welding was taught in many schools.<sup>13</sup>

Because they recognized the fact that untrained women should have some acquaintance with the work they would be expected to do, various schemes were followed out. There were schools for those free during the week end, as well as those established by arrangement with educational authorities. The training period lasted from six to nine weeks during which a maintenance grant was paid. Employers started classes in the factory in charge of skilled workmen. They found women could do good work and turned out many able workers. Women supervisors were trained at Woolwich<sup>14</sup>. The Ministry of Munitions trained about forty-five thousand mainly in 1917 and 1918. Women seemed most efficient on sheet metal work, aeroplane woodwork and acetylene welding. They seemed to take a little longer than men before reaching the same efficiency but a good general train-

12. Fraser, op. cit., 123.

13. Fraser, op. cit., 110, 111, 114, 123.

14. Sci. Am., June 8, 1918, 530; Monthly Review, April, 1918, 208.





ing was very important<sup>15</sup>.

It was felt that the dilution of labor during the war should not lower the standard of wages and in the Treasury Agreement it was clearly understood that the replacement of men by women should not affect adversely the wages customarily paid<sup>16</sup>.

Women's wages were regulated in 1909, by the Board of Trade Act which was extended in 1913. The chief object was to set a minimum rate whether for time or piece work, and for different classes of workers, and different processes. In all cases, the lowest wages for men were higher, but in some cases this meant an increase to quite a number of women for the minimum rates were higher than the normal rates previously paid. As the lower paid women received an increase there was a tendency for those who were better paid to demand similar advances. For thirty years the Women's Trade Union League, not a Union, had tried to secure the organization of women. The only important association of industrial women was the National Federation of Women Workers formed in 1906. In 1913, there were about twenty-two thousand in the insurance section. It was the intention of this organization to give its members to the men's Unions as soon as they would allow women to become members, for it wished men and women to organize whenever possible. This was done with some success in the case of the Lancashire Weavers Amalgamation and the Amalgamated Association of Card Room and Blowing Room Operatives in both of which women predominated and in the National Amalgamated Union of Labour, and the Dock, Wharf, Riverside, and General Workers Union<sup>17</sup>.

The Government undertook to set a reasonable wage by the Fair Wages Clause but only for Government work. All Government con-

15. Report of War Cab. Com. 1919: op. cit., 85.

16. Ibid., 128-129.

17. Ibid., 75-79.



tracts required employers to pay a rate not less favorable than that recognized by employers and trade societies, or by good employers, but this had little effect on women's<sup>18</sup> wages.

Women's wages were highest in trades where workers were paid by the piece and where women and men were employed on nearly similar work. They were lowest where there was the greatest variance in the nature of the work, where women were put on subsidiary or subordinate work. In 1906, the average wages of women were about one-half those of men, on work which was the most similar, and three-eighths of men's where the work was most differentiated. There were several reasons why women were paid less than men. They lack physical strength to perform heavy manual labor, and for other kinds of work they do not have the endurance of men. Women were less appreciated than men; some felt that they ought not to work, others felt that their work was incidental and said that women did not expect the same wages as men. Moreover, they were less stable because of marriage and thus were less ambitious. In addition, women were less trained and when trained some lacked the mechanical sense. Another point which militated against them was their lack of organization. They were also less in demand because they were in a restricted area and often had to enter men's fields although men did not often enter women's fields. Some blamed employers for not paying more, while others felt women should demand more<sup>19</sup>.

For the first nine months of the war, the Government did not regulate wages, but since women were employed on work not considered theirs before the war, a Wages Sub-Committee was appointed on September 20, 1915, which consisted of representatives of the engineer-

18. Ibid., 76-77.

19. Ibid., 69-75.





ing trade and Miss Mary McArthur of the National Federation of Women Workers. This committee made recommendations for payment of women in engineering and similar trades. Women doing skilled work were to be paid the time rates paid to the tradesmen whose work they were doing. Women piece workers were to be paid men's piece rates. In other words, they recommended equal pay for equal work done. After January 27, 1916, this prevailed in all controlled establishments. As this was principally for the engineering trades, in March, 1916, the Ministry of Munitions appointed a special Arbitration Tribunal to deal with questions which had resulted from the dilution of labor. The Ministry of Labor could refer difference to this Tribunal and the Tribunal was to advise the Minister of Munitions of his powers in giving directions about women's wages<sup>20</sup>.

Because of the statutory orders on Women's Wages, there was a big rise in the general average of these compared with what they were before the war. At that time they were about twelve to thirteen shillings a week on an average but during the war the wages of about one million women in munitions averaged approximately thirty-three shillings. Some in other fields earned more, but this was in dressmaking and other similar occupations which were usually followed by women.

The Government's interference was the cause of the close approximation of women's to men's wages. In munitions, they accepted the equal pay for equal work principle, thus setting comparatively high standards. In agriculture there was an increase; but in that line of work women's wages did not compare favorably with men's even during the war<sup>21</sup>.

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20. Ibid., 110, 111; Andrews, op. cit., 91.

21. Report of War Cab. Com. 1919: op. cit., 150.





From 1844, there was regulation of employment by the State and special emphasis was paid to the cleanliness, health, and safety of the workers, especially women and children. Among other things, negotiations were made prohibiting women from working between or cleaning between certain parts of machines in motion, these also limited the hours of their working week; women were not allowed to work underground and periodical medical inspection was required for feminine workers in factories where lead was used to any extent. One provision which helped women was that clear information was to be given of the work and the piece rates for such work<sup>22</sup>.

In order to safeguard the health of the workers the Government appointed the Health of Munitions Workers' Committee, September, 1915, to work under the Ministry of Munitions and to consider and advise on their welfare. There were two women on the Committee, Miss R. E. Squire and Mrs. H. J. Tennant. Mr. Rountree was put in charge. They were to make a careful study of working conditions in munition factories in order that measures might be adopted which would increase the output and develop physical efficiency. Sir George Newman, M.D., was chairman. They investigated such problems as Sunday labor. During the war regulations were changed so that women were allowed to work on Sunday because of Lord Kitchener's appeal that people take no holidays. In November, 1915, this committee reported that if Sunday labor meant excessive hours it was harmful and did not increase the output; on this account they recommended a modification of the policy. They found that overtime work measured in terms of output did not pay, even with the best cooperation on the part of employers. Reports were also made as to hours of labor, fatigue, sickness, and injury, industrial diseases, ventila-  
22. Ibid., 26.



tion and light, welfare supervision, canteens, and workers' food and washing facilities. The committee found that the chief factors influencing the efficiency of women workers were suitable lodgings and canteen facilities. They also emphasized the importance of investigation by the welfare supervisor of sickness, inefficient work and incapacity. This work during the war did much to keep things running smoothly. Investigation of means of transit was said to be of value, and the committee recommended that employers regulate factory hours to suit this. The medical findings of the committee were in general satisfactory. There was more effective supervision than in any previous period and the health of the workers was much improved during the war although there was much more to be done. The committee found less fatigue than had been expected which was attributed to the increased wages which made possible a better diet and improved living conditions. The comparatively satisfactory results were attributed to the increased attention to hygiene in the factory together with the direct and indirect results of better wages<sup>23</sup>.

The extensive employment of so many women, in practically every phase of industry upon processes which had previously been limited to men, created a big problem. The substitution of women for men showed that women were capable of many kinds of work formerly reserved for men. In addition, during the war they received comparatively high wages: when doing a man's work they were given a man's pay. These conditions have increased adherents to a movement started before the war which advocated "equal pay for equal work" which is not favored by the Trade Unions or the workmen. Moreover, the fact that many women dissatisfied with their old life will prefer to stay in occupations, will make competition for the men. Hav-





ing experienced independence during the war, these women will not be satisfied with conditions as they were. While many of them will stay in industry and receive better wages, time will have to solve the problem of their status as compared to that of men.



## CHAPTER IV. WOMEN ON THE LAND.

By their work on the farms, just as in munitions and other occupations, the women of England brought the nation to realize the importance toward the successful ending of the war, of the part played by those unable to participate in the actual fighting; and to understand that the women may render a valuable service in a time of crisis and emergency. As much of the work in munitions was dangerous, that on the land was often heavy manual labor and very tiring; in addition it was not so remunerative as munitions and many other occupations. Yet in all of them, the women had the satisfaction of performing an important service for their country.

Previous to the war, some women were employed in agriculture, but the practice of employing women for wages at ordinary work in the field had practically stopped by 1880 except in a few districts, and on small farms notably in the North, where wives and daughters of tenants helped at work during busy seasons, especially in the harvest time. In some regions, mostly in the North, women worked for wages at outdoor work such as hoeing, weeding, picking stones, and potato planting; but the practice was declining since women showed little inclination to enter upon such work. Young women continued to be engaged for farmhouse and dairy work and in the north were expected to feed the stock and help at harvest work. They were also used in fruit and flower-growing districts but in most regions it was becoming difficult to secure them<sup>1</sup>. For thirty or forty years before the war, women considered the work degrading. The Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury stirred public opinion against it, saying it had done much to degrade women and lower the rate of their

1. Report of War Cab. Com. 1919: op. cit., 16.



wages<sup>2</sup>. Dairying was not so unpopular for in that work there had been some sort of a revival, as well as in horticulture in which women became interested after 1892<sup>3</sup>, because of the outdoor life. But there were only two counties at the beginning of the war where women were actually employed in the fields<sup>4</sup>.

The importance of the food supply was not seriously considered in the early months of the war, although in 1915 the need of workers on the land became evident, as the farmers were left without help when their workmen enlisted. Some saw the importance earlier than others and in 1915 numbers of far-sighted women volunteered for work on the land though the number was small when compared with the need. The Woman's Farm and Garden Union, an old institution for women who wanted to work outdoors, whose object was to increase the number of women agriculturists and poultry farmers, did much to promote the employment of women as tillers of the soil.

In March, the Board of Trade in consultation with the Board of Agriculture took measures to recruit women for service on the land and formed a Central War Agricultural Committee under which sub-committees of women were to develop sentiment for the employment of women. These were well organized by the end of 1915 and due to their efforts more women enrolled for work on the land, though in most cases only for spare time. They used their efforts to urge the village women to work for the farmers, and at the same time to induce the farmers to keep up the production by employing the women.<sup>6</sup>

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2. Billington, op. cit., 203; Wolesley, "Women's Work on the Land", Nineteenth Century, Jan., 1916, 128-38.

3. Billington, op. cit., 204; Wilkins, "Work of Educated Women in Horticulture", Gt. Brit. Board of Ag. Journal, Aug., 1916, 554-59.

4. Report of War Cab. Com. 1919: op. cit., 16.

5. Blatch, Mobilizing Woman Power, 43; Interim Report 1916: Women's National Land Service Corps, 6.

6. Monthly Review, April, 1918, 209; London Times Hist. Mag., XVII, 448.





In 1916, members of the Farm and Garden Union felt that women with previous knowledge of such work should place this knowledge at the disposal of the Government. Accordingly, they went to Lord Selbourne, at that time President of the Board of Agriculture, and after some negotiation they were given permission to organize the training of women. The result was the establishment in February, 1916, of the Woman's National Land Service Corps, which was an offshoot of the Woman's Farm and Garden Union. Mrs. Roland Wilkins was chairman of the executive committee on which were representatives of the Women's Farm and Garden Union as well as of the Corps. Their object was to hasten the enrollment of women of all classes for work on the land in order to insure the maintenance of the home grown food supply for the duration of the war. This, they hoped to accomplish by propaganda and by provision of workers<sup>7</sup>.

The Government advised the County Committees to use the services of the Corps; and to promote cooperation the Woman's National Land Service Corps met occasionally with representatives of the Board of Agriculture and the Board of Trade. In order to avoid friction with the County Committees and to keep in touch with things going on, representative women of County Committees were asked to serve on the Committee of the Land Corps and in some counties this good will was secured by making a member of the County Committee a representative of the Corps on that Committee. Local officers were chosen from District representatives and parish registers so that there was no overlapping<sup>8</sup>. There were decided advantages to be derived from keeping in touch with the County organizations. In the first place, the district representative was able to get in touch

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7. Interim Report 1916: Women's Nat. Land Service Corps, 6.

8. Ibid., 6, 8.



with an authorized central organization when asked to find workers and could see that workers were sent to those districts only where there was a real need. By keeping in touch with the district representative the Corps could make certain that the farmer was a suitable employer for young girls, that the housing was adequate and wages satisfactory. The County Committees gave the Corps very valuable help in this way<sup>9</sup>.

As the need of women for agricultural work increased, the difficulties stood out clearly. It was necessary to induce the farmers who needed help badly to apply for women, but they were so skeptical that they preferred to use almost any other alternative. The agricultural situation was becoming serious; there was a scarcity of workers; farmers were compelled to sell herds of cows as it was difficult to get milkers; crops were unweeded and unharvested. As more men were called to the army, it was feared that there would be a great rise in the price of food<sup>10</sup>. But the farmers had no faith in the ability of women, perhaps because of incapable women who had offered their services from patriotic motives. Village women did not offer their services, because they did not feel the necessity of the work and because it was very poorly paid<sup>11</sup>.

The corps immediately organized for propaganda purposes and appointed speakers and organizers who, by the fall of 1916, had addressed one hundred and sixty meetings. They aimed at organizing the village women in their own district and on the other hand to urge the farmers to employ women, especially for lighter forms of work which implied practically every thing but plowing.

While carrying on this propaganda the Corps, realizing the

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9. Ibid., 8-9.

10. Ibid., 5.

11. Ibid., 5-6.





importance of securing the right type of woman, and anxious not to disappoint the women sent out, took great pains to secure suitable ones in order to impress the farmers favorably. The County Committees worked with women in the rural districts, while the Corps worked with those in the towns and cities. Recruiting speeches were made at meetings, schools, and public gatherings. In the first two months there were over 4,500 applications, but only a small proportion of these ever became members of the Corps, for many simply asked for information. Some were better fitted for work other than agriculture and were referred to the Labor Exchanges. There were many unfitted because of age, temperament, and physique. Others with proper qualifications could not take places, because of the low wages. Many of these were drawn from cities and while capable, were untrained and unfamiliar with the work that they were expected to do. A few were experienced but it was impossible to send many of that type. It was felt that there were three things on which the chances of success might depend: right character and physical strength, knowledge of conditions to be met with, and all the knowledge they could get in six weeks training. The Committee paid great attention to these points; they required references, they informed the women of the drawbacks to the work, and gave them an examination. Because so few had had any training various courses of instruction were arranged. In November, 1915, the Women's Farm and Garden Union started short courses on farms lent for that purpose while it was impossible to give the women extensive training, they were taught to milk several cows, how to handle tools, and to care for animals. During that period nearly all of the unfit were weeded out. Most of the women were placed with individual farmers and the Committee



made sure that they were employed only when there were adequate housing facilities.

Quite an effort was made to secure the enlistment of educated women who by their example and organizing ability were able to bring many women into line. Since the large part of the workers were village women the part taken by educated women was very successful and important<sup>12</sup>.

In 1917, Mr. Prothero appointed a woman's branch staffed entirely by women to extend the work begun earlier with the employment and training of women; a paid woman officer was placed in every county. In March, it was made part of the Food Production Department under the Board of Agriculture.

By 1917, the Corps realized that the situation could not be successfully met by voluntary workers only and proposed to Mr. Prothero, the new President of the Board of Agriculture, that the Government either finance a campaign for the Corps, or organize a Land Army. The Board decided on the latter and in February, 1917, after consultation with the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of National Service, a call to this effect was issued by the War Department. The Land Army was a division of the National Service and the women were to look upon themselves as volunteers in the National Service. It was an organized uniformed Women's Corps and was to do whole time agricultural work<sup>13</sup>. The members were to be recruited by the Ministry of National Service. The selection was made by the Women's War Agricultural Committees after the women had enrolled at

12. Dowling, "A Village Scheme for Training Women", Gt. Brit. Board of Ag. Journal, July, 1916, 353.

13. Annual Report 1917: Women's Nat. Land Service Corps, 4,5; London Times Hist. Mag., XVII, 448-449; Monthly Review, April, 1918, 215; Londonderry, "Women in Khaki", Nat. Service, Jan. 1920, 28.





Employment Exchanges. Girls over eighteen were to be given a month's free training, necessary clothing, maintenance between training period and employment, and a minimum wage of eighteen shillings a week which was raised later to twenty shillings, or twenty-two on passing an efficiency test after the course of training.

The Land Corps did not merge with the Land Army as was expected, for there was still a need for voluntary workers who could give but part time and could pay for their training. But about one hundred of their members joined the Land Army and the two organizations cooperated with each other. Because so much publicity was given to the Land Army, more women joined the Land Corps making recruiting almost unnecessary. The Corps sent many applicants to the Land Army, who in turn sent many to the Corps, namely those who did not want to work full time or join the National Service for a definite period.

There were many schemes for training these women. Training which had been confined to centers arranged by local authorities was extended to private farms. Some farmers gave a farm and a sum to defray expenses. Others trained the new workers on their own farms. Thirty-one counties established training centers at which from two to twenty-two or more women received training extending over periods varying from two weeks to two months. Some counties gave free training; at some centers the workers paid for part of the training and in some cases for all. Some of the counties had grants of from 50 to 100 pounds for such instruction. Courses were also arranged at various educational centers. The first school under the auspices of the Land Army was started in September, 1917. The women were taught milking, dairy work, care of poultry and





stock feeding; if they had a knowledge of horses they were put to work with those animals; they cleaned out sheds, fed stock, and drove carts to town. As their employment became more extensive, they were taught to do Tractor Ploughing. When they were given training by the county it was understood that they would work in that county<sup>14</sup>.

As the women began to realize how much they were needed, many of them became more anxious to take up the work than the men were to have them do so. To overcome this opposition from the men and to prove their ability, the women began to give demonstrations. At these, there were competitions at such work as cutting and binding wood from a hedge, wood sawing, ploughing, harrowing, harvesting, harnessing, driving horses, potato planting, using shovels and preparing vegetable beds and planting rows of cabbages. The expenses were met by donations, and the demonstrations were self-supporting; the profit went to the Red Cross. Women of the same length of training contested together. The work was well done at these and brought results; much progress was made toward effecting a change in public opinion. Many farmers were astonished and were even persuaded to try the women<sup>15</sup>. They learned that women could perform nearly any ordinary work, and in many cases very difficult work.

Farmers who employed these women changed their opinions as to their ability, for they found that they did their work quite well. In some cases they were so successful that farmers were able to increase the number of cows that they kept. Others who had had a couple

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14. "Training Women for Farm Work, etc.," Gt. Brit. Board of Ag. Journal, June, 1916, 881; Summary of Training in Various Centers, Gt. Brit. Board of Ag. Journal, June, 1916, 264-371; Dowling, "A County Training Scheme", Gt. Brit. Board of Ag. Journal, July, 1916, 350.

15. Gt. Brit. Board of Ag. Journal, May, 1916, 132-143; Ibid., July 1916, 349; Ibid., Nov. 1917, 881-883.



of women hired more<sup>16</sup>. In their emergency they found them most valuable, as soon as they were able to rid themselves of their prejudices<sup>17</sup>.

By the close of the war, there had come a striking change in the general attitude toward the work of the women in agriculture. Much of the prejudice had been overcome and the value of the work done by the women had been proved<sup>18</sup>. The place of those in the Land Army had been firmly established and the Land Corps had supplemented them where they could not work. Still some of the farmers maintained their prejudices.

The Corps accomplished one very important work, namely the placing of seasonal workers. They had been requested by the Land Army to supply temporary war workers. The Ministry of Labor worked through the employment agency and the Land Corps mostly with the educated class who worked only during the war. Seasonal workers were needed for potato planting, hoeing, harvesting, and fruit picking. Many calls were received direct from employers and were always referred to county secretaries to make sure that the demand could not be filled by village workers. An attempt was also made to secure adequate wages for the workers. Most of them were from the universities and worked during their vacations-- there was always great demand for such assistance, especially in June and July<sup>19</sup>.

An interesting work was done in the flax fields during the season of 1917. Flax was essential to the manufacture of aero-

16. Winton, "Women's Work in Agriculture in Peace and War", Gt. Brit. Board of Ag. Journal, Dec., 1915, 865.

17. Winton, "Training Women for Farm Work", Gt. Brit. Board of Ag. Journal, Dec., 1915, 879-880.

18. Annual Report 1918: Women's Nat. Land Service Corps, 2  
Ibid., 2; Gt. Brit. Board of Ag. Journal, Dec., 1916, 879.

19. Annual Report 1917: Women's Nat. Land Service Corps, 8.





plane wings. The Germans controlled the flax fields of Belgium and Russia, a fact that made it necessary to grow flax at home. In 1917 the British Flax Growers' Association asked the Woman's National Land Service Corps to contribute two thousand workers for six weeks during the 1918 season. These were provided and sent in relays which meant the engagement of from three to four thousand individuals. Many gave up their vacations in order to help with the work. Enough flax was pulled to supply wings for more than ten thousand aeroplanes<sup>20</sup>. The Board of Agriculture paid part of their railway fare to these seasonal workers, or one and one-fourth times the pre-war fare one way<sup>21</sup>.

Another interesting work, at which the women were very successful, was in the Remount Depots of the Army. Their duty was to care for horses sent by the War Department and to make them fit for active service; they cared for the stables, groomed the horses, fed and exercised them<sup>22</sup>.

The Woman's National Land Service Corps also lent a number of workers to the Timber Production Department and a few were employed on private estates<sup>23</sup>. In addition to the Timber Production Department, there were the Agricultural and Forage Work Sections, which were interchangeable. Women were allowed to enroll in the Land Army for six months or a year as well as for the duration of the war due to the modification of rules in 1918.

The total number of women employed in agriculture rose from about 190,000 in July, 1914, to 228,000 in July, 1918<sup>24</sup>.

20. Annual Report 1918: Women's Nat. Land Service Corps, 7.

21. Annual Report 1917: Women's Nat. Land Service Corps, 13.

22. Ibid., 7, 25; McLaren, Women of the War, 50-52.

23. Annual Report 1918: Women's Nat. Land Service Corps, 4; London Times Hist. Mag., XVII, 449.

24. Ibid., 449; Report of War Cab. Com. 1919: op. cit., 98.



This large increase was due to the patriotic response of women of all classes to take the place of men. Many of them were educated women and because of their influence as well as the fact that the life was healthy, farm work ceased to be considered degrading. In fact, there were certain forms of the work for which women were especially well adapted and at which they were as efficient as men or more so; these were dairying, milking, care of young stock, poultry keeping, and phases of market garden work. The Board of Agriculture thought they did well in spite of the disadvantage of lack of time for sufficient training. It is probable that with encouragement many women will continue in agricultural occupations. Many town girls liked the outdoor life. The instances of success were innumerable and they acquired speed as they went along. Farmers were of the opinion that it would pay them to continue to use the services of women on many types of work.



## CHAPTER V. ORGANIZATIONS.

Throughout the war, there were numerous organizations formed with the object of hastening the successful termination of the conflict. Since there were many distinct bodies with the same aim in view, there was some lack of coordination, a lack that was especially evident during the early months of the war. There were in the neighborhood of 15,000 of these societies, the majority of which accomplished much good; yet there were also many inefficient ones which detracted from the strength of the abler ones and needless time, energy and money were wasted. But as the war progressed, efficiency developed and mistakes were corrected, as a result of which societies with similar aims and wishing to make the same type of appeal coordinated their efforts and achieved splendid results. It would be impossible to compute the number of voluntary workers for under that classification should be placed all who worked for any charity or war fund, and we should thus have to include practically the whole population of women. The number would still be large if narrowed to those who spent the greater part of their time in working for war organizations. Most of the women who were not working at war occupations were putting forth some patriotic effort, as working at the various canteens, entertaining lonesome soldiers, or occasionally giving some time to voluntary work.

Queen Mary's Needlework Guild, an extensive organization, was one of the most representative of these societies doing benevolent work<sup>1</sup>. In the first days of the war, it provided opportunity for countless women who were wondering what service they could perform. Queen Mary who had always been very much interested in her

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1. Stone, op. cit., 237.





Needlework Guild, appealed to the presidents throughout the country to organize for the collection of a large number of garments which would be needed for those who would suffer on account of the war. August 21, 1914, she appealed for useful articles, such as flannel shirts, socks and sweaters, which would be distributed by the Red Cross, as well as for garments which would be needed by the wives and children of soldiers and sailors. These last were to be sent to the Committee for the Prevention and Relief of Distress which were being formed by various mayors<sup>2</sup>. Queen Mary explained that it was not the purpose to interfere with trade or to deprive any worker of employment. It will be remembered that directly after the beginning of the war there were large numbers of women thrown out of employment, particularly in women's trades. Thus women were urged to make garments which would not be bought by the War Office or Admiralty; and were told that garments bought from the shops and sent to the guild would be very satisfactory and perhaps would keep some women employed<sup>3</sup>.

There was an amazing response; many women tried to learn to sew although inefficient ones were encouraged to buy their articles and in that way help to relieve the situation in the shops. At weekly meetings representatives of the Guild met with members of the Red Cross, and St. John's Ambulance Association to ascertain just what articles were needed. Most of the gifts were sent to Friary Court for distribution, although the counties were privileged to give to any cause they were especially interested in, as their own regiment or relief of local distress<sup>4</sup>. In ten months, the \_ \_ \_

2. Billington, op. cit., 26.

3. Fraser, op. cit., 74-75.

4. London Times Hist. Mag., IV, 268.



the guild received over 1,000,000 articles which were given out in about 2,500 requisitions. After the need for such garments lessened a surgical department was formed, and bandages, dressings and similar articles pertaining to hospital needs were made.<sup>5</sup> Due to the efforts of the members of this guild countless articles were made which added materially to the comfort of the troops<sup>6</sup>.

One of the first results of the war affecting women in England was a condition of unemployment, which caused considerable confusion and distress for half a year or longer. There were widespread efforts to relieve this difficulty. One of the most important undertakings in this connection was the starting of a National Relief Fund. The Queen played an important part in connection with this. Her policy was to prevent distress rather than relieve it<sup>7</sup>; thus she felt that employment was better than charity. She appealed to the women of England to help in securing employment for those less fortunate. A committee was called to consider schemes by which employment might be provided. As these were devised they were submitted to the Government Committee for the Prevention and Relief of Distress; when the plans were approved, a grant was made from the National Relief Fund which came to be known as the Queen's Work for Women Fund. Large sums were subscribed.

In the first place, the Committee aimed to assist in the proper distribution of work available, to facilitate alternate employment for workers displaced, and to promote new openings as far as this was in accordance with economic conditions. Second, it planned relief work, such as promoting general schemes for providing

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5. Ibid., 238.

6. Fraser, op. cit., 91.

7. London Times Hist. Mag., IV, 256.





work for women unemployed and considered plans presented to them by the local committees. They tried to make the worker self-maintaining although it was necessary to give relief in the form of work<sup>8</sup>. Whenever possible an attempt was made to increase the number of firms which supplied the needs of the Government. For example, many clothing firms had been unable to make military garments because of technical difficulties. After the Committee had persuaded the War Office to modify the models, the supply of army clothing greatly increased<sup>9</sup>. The Committee also secured contracts of Khaki cloth, blankets and similar articles for manufacturers who would otherwise have been compelled to close. Hosiery manufacturers were given contracts for woolen belts for the troops<sup>10</sup>. Such work was effected by the Special Contracts Department. One London dressmaker, who had 100 unemployed women on her hands because of the practice of economy, took an order for woolen belts and kept her employees at work. Because of such encouragement many small firms were able to keep going<sup>11</sup>.

New workrooms were opened and over 300 branches of the Queen's Fund were established throughout the country. Local committees had to satisfy the Central Committee that there was a real need for the workroom in their respective districts and every attempt was made to prevent any competition with ordinary industry. In these workrooms employment was given only to those previously employed<sup>12</sup> and the Committee aimed to improve their efficiency, as was shown by training schemes which were promulgated<sup>13</sup>. In these training classes, women were taught a variety of subjects such as

8. Ibid., 258.

9. Ibid., 259.

10. Fraser, op. cit., 93.

11. Ibid., 83.

12. London Times Hist. Mag., IV, 261.

13. Ibid., 234.



dressmaking, rag-rug making, chair seat willoughing, cocking and others, all with a view to increasing their usefulness. The wages paid for attending these classes were the same as those paid women in the workrooms-- ten shillings for a forty hour week, a sum that was later increased to eleven shillings, six pence. Australia offered employment to girls both trained and untrained and the Committee made arrangements to send and did send nearly 550 women, between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five, free of charge, to that country<sup>14</sup>.

The Queen kept in daily communication with Miss Mary MacArthur, Secretary, and other members of the Committee who worked with her. They helped to secure a better adjustment of labor and through their efforts 130 firms employing women were enabled to keep running. In 1915, the Government needed 2,000,000 pair of socks for the army, which could be made on automatic knitting needles. By its influence the Committee secured this work for several shops in which women had lost much of the work that they had been doing before the war<sup>15</sup>.

The Central Committee was supplemented by semi-official or voluntary organizations. An older body, the Primrose League, 64 Victoria St., Westminster, was a political society, but it devoted its entire efforts to furthering the national cause. It sent thousands of parcels to troops and hospitals, but it was not so useful as the Central Committee in finding employment for women<sup>16</sup>.

The Women's Service Bureau, 58 Victoria St., Westminster, S.W., came into being in August, 1914, with the object of helping

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14. London Times Hist. Mag., IV, 265-3.

Ibid., 266.

15. Billington, op. cit., 37.

16. Stone, op. cit., 282.





women to obtain suitable employment, both paid and voluntary. It dealt with almost every kind of opening and did notable work. The society was connected with the suffrage movement and aimed at equality of opportunity, training, and payment between women and men. Yet it compromised during the war and placed women in the greatest variety of positions, doing its utmost to get the right woman into the right place<sup>17</sup>.

The Professional Classes Relief Committee aided professional women in a variety of ways. They also received encouragement by the League of Help for Professional Women. If it could do no better, it gave them clerical work or teaching positions<sup>18</sup>.

Among the voluntary organizations was Lady Slater's Workroom, 18 Park St., S.W., which contributed much to the comfort of the troops. These voluntary helpers made chiefly surgical dressings, which they sent to a large number of hospitals<sup>19</sup>. The Belgravia Workrooms and War Hospital Supply Depot at 4 Grosvenor Crescent, S.W., also contributed voluntary work of much the same type<sup>20</sup>. Lady Smith Dorrien's Hospital Bag Fund, 5 Belgrave Place, S.W., was an organization which made bags for wounded soldiers in which to keep their possessions. Thousands of women worked for or subscribed to this work.<sup>21</sup> The Mesopotamia Comforts Fund looked after some of the troops apt to be forgotten<sup>22</sup>.

The War Charities Committee was appointed by the Government in April, 1916. It controlled not only War Charities but all other agencies which appealed to the public for funds. These organizations

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17. Ibid., 290.

18. Billington, op. cit., 85.

19. Stone, op. cit., 302.

20. Ibid., 302.

21. Ibid., 303.

22. Ibid., 304.





were required to register and receive the approval of the committee, as well as keep their accounts open to inspection and audit. This was considered expedient, not so much because of frauds, as of overlapping and consequent waste; moreover, in some organizations too large a proportion of funds raised was absorbed in expenses. Comforts for soldiers and prisoners of war parcels were also coordinated under two national committees<sup>23</sup>.

The Royal Patriotic Fund was a semi-official organization which was organized and managed voluntarily. It administered pensions on the death of soldiers. It merged with the Naval and Military War Pensions Statutory Committee and local committees which were set up in January, 1916, to grant pensions, and wound gratuities and look after dependents. There were women on the Statutory Committee as well as on every County, Borough and City War Pensions Committee in England<sup>24</sup>.

The Soldiers' and Sailor's Families' Association was of a similar type. Created during the South African War, it cared for the dependents of the soldiers and sailors. At first its funds were voluntary, then it administered grants from the National Relief Fund raised early in the war<sup>25</sup>. Many reservists were called and volunteers went immediately, often leaving wives and families dependent. On August 4, 1914, there were but 1500 soldiers wives listed for allowances. Although Mr. Asquith announced that all soldiers' wives were to stand on an equal footing for the duration of the war and for pensions, the Army Pay Office could not immediately adjust itself to

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23. Fraser, 44.

24. Ibid., 43-3.

25. Ibid., 41.



meet the requests for 300,000 allowances. In this connection, the Soldiers' and Sailors' Family Association rendered valuable assistance by advancing allowances. Often in critical cases, they gave additional grants. The Association had offices in every village to which difficulties were taken. Homes were visited and sometimes workrooms were started, which gave out sewing and knitting for soldiers and sailors to dependents<sup>26</sup>.

In this struggle the food question was considered of greatest importance. This situation was the result of the mobilization of great armies, and the shortage of tonnage growing out of the necessity of transporting troops. In spite of the fact that there was plenty of wheat in Australia it could not be utilized because ships were needed for other purposes. The submarine menace added to the difficulty. It was realized that those who could solve this problem would win the war. Naturally there were organizations which did active work to create the saving of food. There was the National Food Reform Association as well as new ones organized for the purpose. Typical of these were the National Food Economy League, and the Patriotic Food League. These aimed at instructing in the scientific principles of the economical use of food and issued admirable leaflets, cookery books, and handbooks for housewives. Exhibitions were arranged where demonstrations of most economical cooking stoves, time and labor-saving devices and exhibits and posters on the care of children. In connection with these were competitions for the best war bread, or the best dress made at a low cost, and similar achievements. The prizes for these were usually paid in war certificates. The Ministry of Food dealt with food problems of

26. Ibid., 41-2.





supply, price, regulations and propaganda<sup>37</sup>.

Because many women were lonesome with their husbands at the front, they showed a tendency to congregate in public houses to talk over matters concerning them<sup>38</sup>. To check this, Lady Jellicoe and Lady French were instrumental in the formation of local committees which provided attractive centers at which soldiers wives could read popular papers, obtain tea and enjoy a social hour. Many educated women patronized them and weekly recreation evenings proved most successful. The women gained a more intelligent understanding of the position of the troops, and there were opportunities for sound advice on the care of children. "Tipperary Rooms" was the name first applied to these club rooms which were linked up with the Tipperary League. They were next called "Women's War Clubs" and "Women's Patriotic Clubs", until finally 135 of them were connected in the Central League of Women's United Service Clubs, all sanctioned by the War and Admiralty Offices<sup>39</sup>.

In some sections of the country, especially in the less educated districts and in the vicinity of training camps, the presence of young girls was a nuisance. To combat this problem the National Union of Women Workers formed a Central Women's Patrol Committee composed of women of experience who had a knowledge of girls. The Chief Commissioner of Police gave them almost instant recognition and signed their cards which entitled them to assistance in the discharge of their duties. They patrolled beats assigned by the organizer, made friends with the girls and gained their confidence, warned those who behaved improperly and reported anything serious

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37. Ibid., 302.

38. Billington, op. cit., 84.

39. Fraser, op. cit., 43.



to the patrol leader. While at these duties the patrols put girls in touch with local societies, clubs, or classes. These patrol women through their tact and sympathy proved so successful in London that the Home Office recommended the adoption of the scheme in provincial centers.<sup>30</sup> Their work was mostly voluntary but in 1916, they were given a subsidy of 400 pounds from the police fund for carrying on their work in London<sup>31</sup>. Usually, patrol women were busy at home during part of the day and devoted a few hours every evening to the work. In 1913, there were 3,000 patrols, 85 of these were in London and paid by the Police Commissioner<sup>32</sup>. Two patrolled the Woolwich Arsenal and two worked as park keepers in the Kensington Gardens, and had the power of arrest. Military, Admiralty, Police and Civil authorities joined in praise of their achievements. These patrols were successful in persuading many girls to join clubs which provided suitable surroundings in which to invite friends and enjoy music, games, and other entertainment<sup>33</sup>. They patrolled the streets until two in the morning and found lodgings for girls, personally conducted them through the city, separated them from men and showed them their foolishness<sup>34</sup>. Almost contemporaneous with the organization of patrols was the formation of the Women Police Service. At the beginning of the war, there were no women police, though there was a feeling that the war would interfere with moral standards, and that the ordinary police would more than have their hands full. In September, 1914, Miss Damer Dawson started the Women Police Service and members were trained. The first two of these started work at Groutham in November, 1914. That they were

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30. Billington, op. cit., 96-97.

31. Fraser, op. cit., 339.

32. Ibid., 337-8.

33. Ibid., 339-40.

34. Diefenbach, "Women's Work in the Y", Lit. Digest, Oct. 25, 1919, 35-36.





successful is shown in a letter of Major General Hammersley, commanding officer of the 11th Division who, writing of the two women at Granthorn, said,

"I understand that there is some idea of removing the two members of the Women Police now stationed here. I trust that this is not the case. The services of the two ladies in question have proved of great value. They have removed sources of trouble to the troops, in a manner that the military police could not attempt. Moreover, I have no doubt whatever that the work of these two ladies in an official capacity is a great safeguard to the moral welfare of the young girls in the town."<sup>35</sup>

February 17, 1915, the Women's Police Service was inaugurated by the Commandant, Miss Damer Dawson. In April, 1916, the Minister of Munitions, on the recommendation of the Chief Commissioner of Police, asked for women police to work in the Munition factories and made Miss Dawson his representative for the selection, training, supplying and controlling of the required force. This work consisted of checking the entry of the women into the factories, dealing with petty offenses and appearing with necessary cases at Court<sup>36</sup>. At each factory was an inspector, sergeants, and constables. Women who enrolled in this service were given eight weeks training, which consisted of drill, first aid work, and practical instruction. Like the men, they trained in ju - jitsu in order to be able to hold their own in drunken brawls<sup>37</sup>. Of 500 girls trained in eight months, nine-tenths kept to their work. When an air raid was in progress, the firemen and policewomen kept charge of munition factories<sup>38</sup>.

The success of their work depended chiefly on the attitude of the Chief Constable and an attempt was made to appoint police-women only where he was friendly. It was generally conceded that they were very successful and could fill a place which the policeman

35. London Times Hist. Mag., XVII, 456.

36. Ibid., 456-457.

37. Walbrook, "Women Police and their Work", 19th Century, Feb. 1919, 327-

38. London Times Hist. Mag., XVII, 45-6.





could not. Still there was prejudice against any innovation and men did not welcome the women, not realizing that each was fitted for a separate duty. They frustrated much folly and evil, traced lost children, checked unpunctuality in closing public houses, and selling liquor to young children and were engaged in many other useful activities. By 1918, 2,000 women had been trained and many were incorporated in the London Police Force though to this there was quite a little opposition<sup>39</sup>.

The work of the local relief had its place since out of the war much distress and unthought of conditions arose. The work of the various organizations satisfied a big need. But the English women were not selfish in their relief measures. In the early days of the war there were many migrations from Belgium, in fact the destitute and homeless began to arrive before the last of August<sup>40</sup>. After the fall of Antwerp, they came by thousands. By the end of November, 1914, the number had reached 45,000, then the rate diminished until by the summer of 1915 the number could be controlled. By that time, about 365,000 had come and their arrival caused a serious problem to meet which various expedients were tried. The Ulster organization had prepared for the possibility of civil war in Ireland and had made arrangements for transferring fugitives to England. It had lists of homes and blanks to send out asking how many Irish refugees could be cared for. Lady Lugard who thought this organization could be used for the Belgians, received the assent of the leaders of the organization as well as the approval of the Catholic Church, since the Belgians were of that faith. The War Refugees Committee appealed through the newspapers of August 24, 1914, for hospitality, food, and 39. Walbrook, "op. cit.", Nineteenth Century, Feb. 1919, 377-382.  
40. London Times Hist. Mag., IV, 452.



personal service<sup>41</sup>, which appeal met with a splendid response. In a fortnight, places were provided for 100,000 refugees. Offers came from all parts of the Kingdom and from all sorts of homes. The biggest problem was not to systematize the hospitality but to meet the great needs of the refugees, rest, medical attention, and clothing, as well as to place them in suitable homes. As most of the workers were voluntary, it took some time to develop the office system and to catch up on correspondence but the Belgians did not suffer on this account.

It was a big task to provide temporary quarters when the refugees were arriving in such large numbers. It was clear that the government would have to assume charge because of many problems as public health, reaction upon employment, and the fact that German spies might come disguised as refugees. The Local Government Board assumed control September 10, 1914; leaving the War Refugees Committee to manage the work it had undertaken but relieved it of much anxiety about the various problems. There was another advantage growing out of this arrangement: experienced workers could be paid to do the clerical and office work<sup>42</sup>.

The Women's Emergency Corps started two days after war was declared and was among the first organizations to help the Belgian Refugees. This Corps, the idea of an actress, Miss Decima Moore, was founded for the purpose of preventing the overlapping of voluntary aid<sup>43</sup>. It cooperated with the Prince of Wales Fund, Queen Mary's Work for Women Fund, Red Cross, and the War Refugees Committee as well as with others. It provided an outlet for many

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41. Ibid., 461.

42. London Times Hist. Mag., IV, 433.

43. Ibid., 493-4.





restless ones who were unable to offer their services at the front<sup>44</sup>. Ninety thousand registered within a week, among them were medical women, nurses, teachers, musicians, artists, typists and those who wished to be employed as motor drivers and elevator attendants. Later companies were thankful to use the services of these women. During the period of unemployment for women, this Corps opened fifteen branch houses and supplied work to needlewomen. It was the first to feed the Belgians-- they conceived the idea of collecting London's surplus food which later developed into the National Food Fund. About 600 interpreters were enrolled. These Women who were able to speak some Continental language such as Flemish, French, Dutch, Russian or Greek met Continental trains, day and night, carrying lists of available hotels and arranged accommodations at reduced prices for destitute refugees. One lasting work was the opening of workrooms where children's toys were made<sup>45</sup>.

The London Women's Suffrage Society, 53 Victoria St., S.W., gave its attention to the care of the Belgian Refugees. It registered the arrivals and also provided interpreters. The government continued to use this organization and put its members in responsible positions<sup>46</sup>.

In addition to organizations which furthered the national cause by their work at home, there were those with service abroad as their objective. Among these was the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry. Members of this organization were called Fanyas and were the first British women to replace British men in France. It was a voluntary organization and had done work for the Belgians. It started work at Calais in January, 1916, the first motor ambulance convoy for

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44. Robins, "War Service at Home", Nineteenth Century, 76, 113.

45. Billington, op. cit., 301.

46. London Times Hist. Mag., IV, 273-4.



the British. They next acted as ambulance drivers and mechanics for conveying British wounded in and around Calais. This was their most important duty in France. The Corps increased in number and in April, 1918, as the Germans advanced they were the only women given permission to remain and were officially attached to the British Army Corps as ambulance drivers. They worked at casualty clearing stations and it was not unusual for them to make trips of from 100 to 150 miles. By the autumn of 1918, their drivers had won nine military medals, three Croix de Guerre, the Croix Civique and the Order of Leopold II<sup>47</sup>.

In 1917, women were asked to go to France to take the places of men in civilian occupations at the bases and near the fighting lines; and for this purpose the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps was founded. It was an outgrowth of several voluntary organizations, all believing that women could be trained in many lines of activities and release men for the fighting line. In earlier days women in uniform had caused excitement and amusement but people gradually grew accustomed to them.

One of the smaller of these bodies was the Women's Reserve Ambulance, sometimes called the Green Cross Society, 199 Piccadilly, W., founded in June, 1915. It was originally formed to supply a trained and disciplined body of women for use in emergency war work. Their motor transport section was distinguished for its assistance to the police while air raids were in progress. In the first of these their ambulance was the first on the scene in London. These women also met trains, transported men to hospitals, and acted as

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47. London Times Hist. Mag., XVII, 454-455.

48. Fraser, op. cit., 216-217.





orderlies at canteens and military hospitals. As a rule, they owned their own cars and the society bore the expenses<sup>48</sup>.

Soon after the outbreak of war the Women's Volunteer Reserve, 15 York Place, W., started to drill women on the same lines as men and to discipline them so they would be ready for any emergency. No social distinctions were made although it was especially useful for women to whom the work mattered more than the wages. They wore khaki uniforms and were drilled and ready to assist the state as nurses, doctors, stretcher bearers, orderlies, motorists, signallers, carpenters, and cooks. The Reserve sent members abroad and while it did not pay them it secured their positions, either government or private. Many of its members worked in canteens<sup>49</sup>.

The Women's Auxiliary Force, 82 Victoria Street, S.W., offered only spare time voluntary work of a non-industrial nature<sup>50</sup>.

The Women's Signallers' Corps was founded in 1915, under the command of Mrs. E. J. Parker, sister of Lord Kitchener. This group believed women should be trained in every branch of signalling and release men. Thus, they trained women in all branches of signalling, semaphore, flag mechanical arm; in morse, flag, cable, sounder, whistle, lamp and heliograph as well as map reading. At the Headquarter's Training School, they introduced wireless for women in England<sup>51</sup>.

The Women's Legion was one of the largest of these uniformed bodies. One of its first activities was the formation of a cooking section at a meeting at Londonderry House early in 1915. At first it provided instructresses to teach men who were to go over-

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48. Fraser, op. cit., 216-217.

49. London Times Hist. Mag., XVII, 455.

50. Stone, op. cit., footnote, 295.

51. Fraser, op. cit., 216-7.





seas as army cooks, then its members replaced men serving with the army at home. These women wore khaki uniforms and were under strict military orders given by their own women officials. The motor transport section was formed in January, 1916, on much the same principles as the above. The Commandant, Miss Christobel Ellis, collected experienced women motor drivers to work in connection with the army and supplied drivers, vulcanizers, and repairers to different commands.

The military cooking section of the Legion was the first body officially recognized and accepted by the War Office under the scheme for employment of women in the army<sup>52</sup>. July 22, 1915, the Quartermaster General accepted trained soldier cooks for their work in France.

As these women were found to be successful and economical they were gradually made use of in various parts of the country in spite of much opposition. In 1917, over 4,000 were employed, and 20,000 more were ready if the country should call for them<sup>53</sup>.

In 1917, because of the many appeals for the substitution of women, the Army Council decided to establish a Corps<sup>54</sup>. The first scheme for the Woman's Army Auxiliary Corps was issued as an Army Council Instruction, July 7, 1917. The Administration was placed in the hands of the Adjutant General's Department. The object was

"to effect substitution of women for soldiers in certain employments, throughout units, formations, and offices administered by the Army Council (other than the War Office hospitals and those administered by the Finance Member) at home and at the bases and on the Lines of Communication Overseas".<sup>55</sup>

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52. London Times Hist. Mag., IV, 434.

53. Londonderry, "Women in Khaki", National Service, January 1920, 27.

54. London Times Hist. Mag., XVII, 434.

55. London Times Hist. Mag., XVII, 435.



The Military Cooking Section and the Motor Transport Section, as well as the reserve corps mentioned above formed the nucleus of this new organization.

Their work was classified under several different headings, clerks, typists, cooks and laundresses, motor transport workers, storehouse women, tailors, messengers, shoemakers, bakers, telephone operators, postal employees, and workers in technical and miscellaneous lines. The cooks of the Women's Legion were the first W.A.A.C.'s called to France. Before they joined the new organization, they provided 6,000 cooks in 300 camps. After a sufficient number had been sent the remainder were used at home<sup>56</sup>.

Mrs. Chalmers Watson, M.D., sister of Sir Eric and Sir Auckland Geddes was Chief Controller, followed by Mrs. Burleigh Leigh. In addition there were three chief controllers and Controller for Home Commands and Overseas, as well as area controllers and an administrative and inspection staff at headquarters of each command, and administrators in charge of hostels and camps. They wore khaki uniforms and the officers were distinguished by their various badges of roses and fleur-de-lys.

They ate the same kind of food, lived in similar lodgings and received the exact pay of the private soldiers. They adapted themselves well to unaccustomed rules. They were under very strict orders, just as the men, but their superiors were called administrators in place of officers. That they were very successful seems to be borne out by the statement of the Army Council, 1918,

"All reports bear out the fact that the W.A.A.C. during the crisis have more than justified their existence and of the Army to which they belong".<sup>57</sup>

In 1918, they were recruited through the home commands as well as

56. Ibid., 435.

57. Ibid., 438.





by the employment exchanges; there were many training centers; headquarters were located at 49 Grosvenor Street, London. April 9, 1918, the Secretary of State announced that Queen Mary had assumed position as Commandant-in-Chief for the W.A.A.C., and that henceforth it would be called Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps.

The Admiralty decided to carry out the substitution of women for naval purposes, especially for various shore duties, as the Army did with the W.A.A.C.'s. As a result, the Women's Royal Naval Service, called the "Wrens", was established November 23, 1917, with Dame Katharine Furse, G.B.F., as Director under the Second Sea Lord. This was a small organization but its members were carefully chosen. They wore an attractive navy uniform and were employed on definite duties directly connected with the navy<sup>58</sup>. There were two branches of officers, administrative and non-administrative. Members enrolled for twelve months or for the duration of the war as the W.A.A.C.'s. Training for an administrative office covered four weeks of physical drill, lectures, and practical work. The training for the different branches differed in length, as for example for the clerical branch, three weeks, typists, six weeks. Motor drivers already trained before the enrollment were given two weeks more. The work in the different branches was quite similar to that of the W.A.A.C.<sup>59</sup>.

The latest of the Women's Services was the Women's Royal Air Force, which came into being in the spring of 1918. The first commandant was Lady Gertrude Crawford; she was followed by Hon. Violet Douglas Pennant and Mrs. Gwynne-Vaughn, O.B.E. In October,

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58. Ibid., 443.

59. London Times Hist. Mag., 443.



1918, this body numbered 20,000<sup>60</sup>. Some were from other corps and others were new. They were called the Penguins and did practically the same replacement work as the W.A.A.C's and the Wrens. In addition they worked on the assembling and the repair of aeroplanes and similar light aircraft work. There was a large immobile section. The mobile section did work all over the country. They did every form of service done by men except to act as pilot.

It was clearly recognized that maintaining good spirits and morale among the men in camp was of the utmost importance in winning the war. Physicians considered it not only valuable but necessary<sup>61</sup>. The Three Arts Employment Bureau accomplished a double purpose. Artists, with few exceptions, endured many hardships during the war, for dramatic tours were cancelled and the players were often placed in need of financial aid. To relieve this, a committee selected the best talent, which managers could apply for. Many of these were sent to France to give entertainment to wounded and other soldiers. Concert parties were arranged for under the auspices of the Y.M.C.A. Each party stayed in France two or three weeks and gave three concerts daily. Miss Lena Ashwell was the center of the movement; the artists were benefited and the morale of the soldiers was improved. The Y.M.C.A. put Miss Ashwell in entire charge of providing concerts at the front. By 1917, more than 3000 concerts had been given in the camps and hospitals of France, Malta and Egypt. Members of these parties were called Comforteers and their event was much looked forward to. Miss Ashwell heard all the programs before the parties left for France, and realizing the heterogeneity of her audiences, was particular in making her selec-

60. Ibid, 445.

61. Stone, op. cit., 315-319.



tions. Nurses as well as the men benefited from the relaxation<sup>62</sup>.

Since the women of England took part in nearly every form of war activity and worked in behalf of innumerable organizations of various types it would be impossible to give a complete account of their work, for there were many private enterprises, yet most of their work could be classed under some of the previous headings which are representative of the whole.

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62. London Times Hist. Mag., IV, 496.





## CHAPTER VI. RESULTS OF THE WAR AS THEY AFFECTED WOMEN IN ENGLAND.

The war hastened developments in the life of English women, many of which would have taken place ultimately. An outstanding result was a quickened sense of the equality of women with men. While women have not been recognized as equal to men, progress has been made in gaining such recognition.

The need of large armies depleted the industrial organization at home and made it necessary to utilize the services of women. This gave them an opportunity to prove that they could be as efficient as men in many occupations from which they had always been excluded. The majority of these workers were untrained but they improved rapidly with experience, especially after attendance at training schools. They could not be expected to do as well as the men in skilled work, which required several years of training but it was generally conceded that in work which did not demand great physical strength the women compared very favorably with the men. Because of this fact, employers are more willing to employ women, although seldom at the wages paid to men. In few cases have women satisfied employers and trade unions that they are equal to men. Yet the belief in the inferiority of women to men has been destroyed and their economic status in England has greatly improved<sup>1</sup>.

This approach to equality with men is implied in the new order of knighthood instituted by King George for "services rendered to the Empire whether at home or abroad". Women are equally eligible for this honor with men<sup>2</sup>.

The clearest and perhaps the most tangible evidence of this recognition of the ability of women, was the result of the pas-

1. Report of War Cab.Com. 1919: op. cit., 83-84, 103-105.

2. Current Hist. N.Y. Times Mag., VI, 328-329.



sage of the Representation of the People Bill, introduced in the House of Commons in May, 1917; after three speeches it passed by a majority of 3-1. In December it was accepted by the House of Lords, and was given royal assent, February 6, 1918. The status of women was vitally affected by this bill, for one clause provided for suffrage for all women of thirty or above, which meant 6,000,000 women. This goes far in acknowledging that women have a place in the state which they have sought for with much vehemence at times, since the days of John Stuart Mill. Although this movement had few supporters in the nineteenth century<sup>3</sup>, just before the war it was gaining quite a large number of adherents<sup>4</sup>.

Many people felt that the suffrage question should not have been considered during the war, but in spite of this, the political and economic status of women greatly improved. Many who were entirely opposed to Women's Suffrage revised their opinions as a result of Women's War Activities. Mr. Asquith said that "the women presented to him an unanswerable case"<sup>5</sup>. Many former enemies felt that after the war the women who had filled such an important place during the war should be given the right to be heard on the numerous questions which would arise directly affecting their interests<sup>6</sup>.

Although it is impossible to be specific as to extent or degree, it seems clear that the majority of women in England have gained a new outlook upon life. Women who cared for little but pleasure before the war found life of much greater value when they were doing something worth while. Women of the wage earning class

3. Living Age, v. 296, 692-4; Ibid, 368-370; New Republic, Nov. 3, 1917, 19-20.

4. Fraser, op. cit., 262.

5. Fraser, op. cit., 262.

6. Ibid., 262.





were not the only ones busy in munitions factories, or on the land, though they were in the majority. It was said that 80% of English women were employed in some useful way by the end of the first year of the war<sup>7</sup>. It is not probable that these women will be content with their old manner of living. In some cases those who had not thought of working previous to the war will continue in occupations because they enjoy their work. It is also true that many will be unable to marry because of the casualties caused by the war. Thus many who would have married will be compelled to continue in occupations.

While working together in munition factories and on the land women of different classes learned to understand each other better than before. Canteens played their part in "bringing together the classes and masses". At these all classes met, with one big interest, a fact that is likely to promote certain social changes.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, the provision of entertainment for territorial troops helped to create a spirit of friendliness between the different parts of the Empire.

The women who experienced economic independence acquired self confidence. Many who had been dependent were forced to earn their living, thus they became self reliant and independent. This new attitude and spirit was illustrated by their actions in relation to a strike in February, 1919, in London. The women were very indignant and came out openly against the strike declaring that their working day was longer than their husbands' and that they did not want their husbands' hours shortened. This could hardly have happened before the war but is typical of a new sense of independ-

8. On Canteens, Saturday Review, March 23, 1919, 251-2.



ence<sup>9</sup>.

It was not until during this war that the medical women achieved recognition of their ability. The value of their services had been tested by other nations before the English Medical Department would use them; after their efficiency had become evident they were put in entire charge of large military hospitals and were as successful as the men. As a result of their splendid record they won lasting respect and greatly advanced the position of women in surgery as well as in nursing<sup>10</sup>.

Before the war, the large infant death rate had been receiving the attention of women throughout England. It was estimated that 100,000 infants died in their first year<sup>11</sup>.

During the war there was a realization of what this would mean together with the war casualties. Baby Clinics and Children's hospitals were established<sup>12</sup> in an effort to change this situation. The Local Government Board and the Board of Education issued circulars promising grants for local relief. The Woman's Cooperative Guild, Liberal Woman's Suffrage Union and Women's Liberal Federation, all did propaganda work and cooperated with the Association of Infant Consultations and Schools for Mothers. Day nurseries were established and due to the many efforts the infant death rate decreased<sup>13</sup>.

The value of training was clearly manifest during the war. The educated women proved invaluable and were in a position to serve their country better than the others. This was the case in practically every line that they entered. Parents had not considered the

9. Sellars "Among the Strikers' Womenfolk", 19th Century, May, 1919, 971-80.

10. See Chapter 1, p. 18.

11. London Times Hist. Mag., IV, 491; Fawcett "Women's Work in War Time", Contemporary Review, December, 1914, 779.

12. Ibid., 779. 13. Fraser, op. cit., 280.



importance of training daughters as well as sons, but the necessity was demonstrated during the war and the result is likely to be that many more women will be trained than formerly. The opportunity for higher training has at last been granted to them. Oxford University recently voted to grant degrees to women, a privilege long denied them. In this same connection, it may be stated that Lincoln's Inn accepted the application of Mrs. Gwyneph Margory Thomson to become a barrister.





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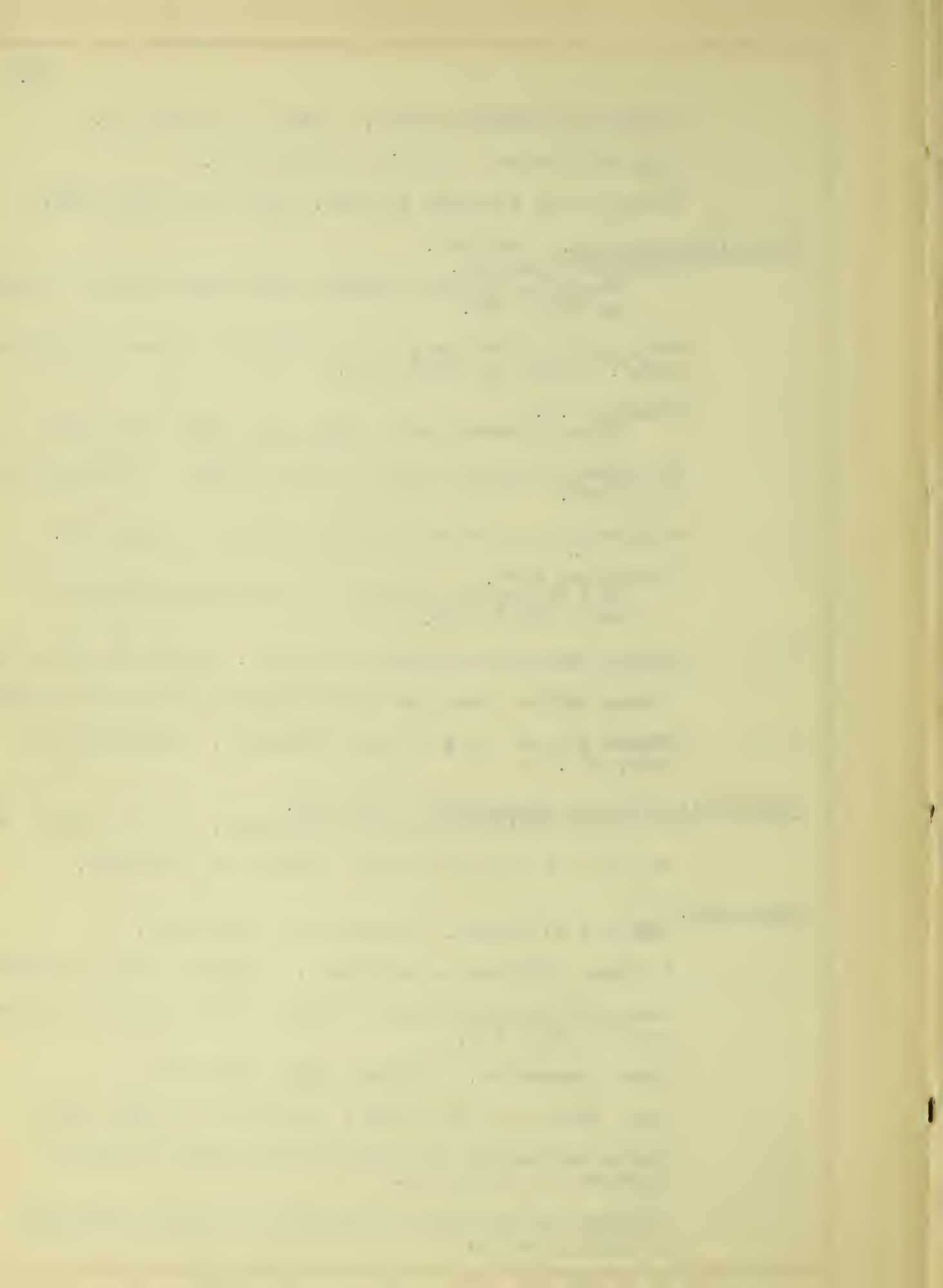
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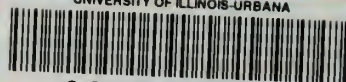
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